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DECEMBER 22, 2003



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MACLEAN'S

THE BOSTONIAN'S WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE

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THE TRUTH ABOUT XMAS

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CHRISTMAS FOR EVERYONE

Every year, you hear of places that ban mention of Christmas for fear of offending

RECENTLY, in a school in the United States, my daughter's school never stop. French, the Hindu Diwali, the Muslim Remembrance, the Jewish Hanukkah—all featuring a student from each religion explaining its significance to classmates. And don't get me started on the sounds and spectacle of 30 four- and five-year-old girls in uniform, singing Christmas carols in English and French. My wife said they reminded her of hooves clapping in a bus

ker, and the joyful noise they made singing together to that tune.

As *Patricia Patterson* writes in our cover package, reconciling Canada's multi-faith nature with its Judeo-Christian roots is especially challenging at Christmastime. Can you celebrate one faith without offending people of other religions? And when many people of the dominant faith—Christians—longer go to church, are they eager to seek to save, or even stuff like “happy holidays” and “season’s greetings”?

The answer for many people to that last question is “no”—which may, among other things, explain the otherwise inexplicable popularity of such secular dreck as *Jingle All the Way*, now looping endlessly on sound systems in shopping malls across the country. Too bad, because my daughter’s school has taught people to become closer when they acknowledge differences rather than pretend they don’t exist. Every year, you hear of places that ban mention of Christmas for fear of offending employees or clients of other religions. Last year, Toronto actually declared that the two-storey City Hall would be called the “Holiday” tree for that reason. But to the contrary, as a clear-cut package through interviews with people of other faiths, many non-Christians welcome the celebration of Christmas by others because they respect expressions of faith, much the strength of their own.

What’s key—respect—not tolerance—for others’ beliefs. That means, for example, letting Sikh wear turbans without asking them ask permission, as has been the case with the McDonald’s owner of some sandwich chain franchise who was told he had to apply in writing for a waiver in order to wear one. It means letting the urge to declare your own religion—or absence of belief—

Even if you don't like religion, the chance to learn about other beliefs gives a base on which to build values

superior to the value system of materialism alone. Even if you don't like organized religion or believe in a deity, the chance to learn about other beliefs gives you a base by which to develop your own views.

There’s an episode in *Neil Gaiman’s* comic-book *Artifice* in which Muffy denounces her best friend’s reasons for not attending her Christmas party. Francisco, who is Jewish, is instead visiting Hanukkah with his family. They fall apart when Muffy tells her that Hanukkah “isn’t important” at Christmas. In happy-ever-after fashion, they make up when Muffy—who knew nothing about the celebration she despised—learns about the importance of other religions’ holy days.

There are encouraging signs this year that Christmas is being taken out of the clear air, because backed down, and again has a “Christmas” tree. Christians are both excited about Christmas—and this year, for the first time, our daughter is old enough to have some understanding of its proper meaning. She has only one concern: about Dec. 25. She’d like to have an outfit as cool as the one her classmate wore for Diwali.

Anthony Wilson-Smith

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'Decreases in taxes mean decreases in health care. We demand better care, yet we give the government less. If you would like a better system, pay up.' —ERIC SHADWIN, *waterloo*

Physician, heal thyself

I recently asked the Ontario Medical Association on behalf of my physician wife when her salary income has been over the past eight years. Here is the answer: "The average gross income for family doctors has increased by 12 per cent between 1991-1992 and 2000-2001," or 1.2 per cent per year. Is it any surprise why there is a cover story "The doctor is in... pain" (Dec. 8)?

A. R. SMITH, Ottawa, Ont.

Ontario family physician Judy Chew states: "I find myself frustrated by the increased complexity of the cases I now deal with, and resentful when I hear how much the other specialists earn, and other professionals such as the lawyers and dentists." This attitude says a lot about why the health-care system is so messed up in Canada. In the country I come from, Romania, doctors earn about \$2000 a month but they are much more dedicated to the cause of helping people. The problem with well-paid jobs is that they may attract people whose sole measurement of success is the money, not the achievement.

Stelian Andonea, Kitchener, Ont.

The patient-doctor structural disconnect illustrates the poor job professional associations do in communicating with the general public. A similar disconnect happens teachers, lamented by many for being overpaid and underworked. Having walked the walk on both sides of the teaching, I'm convinced that the severe lack of awareness and understanding among employment solitudes generates uncharitable envy and resentment that profoundly damages Canada's social fabric.

Steve Adesky, Burlington, Ont.

Steve Adesky, Burlington, Ont.

SAM'S BEST DOCS | SPURIOUS DRUGS ARENA

MACLEAN'S
EXCLUSIVE
YOUR DOCTOR
PREScribes A CURE
FOR HEALTH CARE

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positions will be left for international medical graduates or physicians looking to practice in a different field. The government's reluctance to increase the number of post-graduate positions at the same rate in class seems to be a misguided attempt to keep graduates from family medicine. As a result, some students will be forced into a job that is not their first choice rather than risk not matching to a position at all. Rest in my, this action will do nothing to lessen the dissatisfaction presently felt by family doctors.

Natalie Balash, Ottawa

In response to your story about the lack of physician, we psychologists often discover

Blessed gays | The continuing controversy over same-sex unions

A Q&A with Anglican Bishop Michael Lington, who performs "blessings" for gay couples in Vancouver or provided refuge from all others. Sean, called Lington, who is acting in opposition to official church policies, but not conducting actual marriages, with others like Rev. Steve of Waterloo, is one of only a handful in Canada who operate like

such family physicians spend much of their time doing psychological counselling and therapy with their patients. Although it is important for patients to talk to their physicians about their health concerns and to receive counselling about them, professional psychologists are better trained to provide that therapy. However, such services from psychologists are not included in any provincial health plans. This medical counselling ties up physician time and they then have less opportunity to provide medical care. Funding psychological services are preventional health plans would result in physicians having more time to provide proper medical care, and there would not be a greater need to recruit more physicians.

Diane Hutchinson, Victoria General Hospital, Winnipeg

Intergenerational viewpoints

When I hear the world situation blared on a faded boomer/Woodstock generation, I wonder what history class these complainants slept through. "Boomer capitalism" (The Mail, Dec. 8): Yes, those were great times, full of promise, a post-war generation that took to heart the teachings of Carter, Trudeau, Watts and Gandyep: We marched for peace, equality, the environment and for social, consumer and health issues as never before. We've had our failures, but recognises too, women and minorities have come further in the past 40 years than the previous 400, and the environment and social causes continue to make progress. Don't expect the navel-gazing of millenials to be addressed in a single generation. Our boomer generation could use the help. Otherwise, in 40 years, what will they say of us?

ROB KIRKWOOD, Vernon

The men who headed up Enron and WorldCom were, respectively, Kenneth Lay and Bernard Ebbers, and they are not baby boomers by David Foul's definition (1947-1966 in Canada, where Ebbers was born in 1941, and 1948-1964 in the U.S., where Lay arrived in 1948). Mind you, boomers are neither powerless nor Martians—take George W. Bush (1946). However, Bush is closely situated by Vice President Richard Cheney (1941), Secretary of State Colin Powell (1937) and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld (1932). The babies of '50 and early '40s are still at many a helm. One speechified, angry threnody in the notes

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check their facts before they seal the envelope or click the "send" button.

Keith Johnson, Guelph, Ont.

Sorry, the baby boomer generation is an easy target, but we thirtysomethings will soon enough throw away our ideals when we see just how easily and wide the path of least resistance is.

Mike Belotti, Fredericton

Christmas shopping

I was especially reading "A Christmas" (Children, Dec. 8). Not at the stores, or commercials of these toys, but at the parents. What kind of television shows are children watching at two years old to be asking for fashion dolls and clothes?

Todd Atkinson, Memphis, Tenn.

I know the Canadian Forces were in trouble when I read in about the "hand mag" that was sent to Macmillan's new flavolavola. Is that supposed to increase recruitment?

Reinhard Kellhammer, Mississauga, Ont.



What kind of TV shows are kids watching to be asking for fashion dolls and clothes?

paned me far my transfer to the University of Vienna. University-colleges, and college elsewhere in Canada, are the unusual benefit of post secondary education.

Jonna Ehsai, Sudbury, Ont.

I have two kids currently attending the University of British Columbia, and the quality of their education is being eroded continually. The university takes many more students than it can handle. Classes are extremely overcrowded, even when students get to third and fourth year. It is difficult to get the classes one needs to fill up quickly. We are from northern B.C. and chose UBC because it had a good reputation and guaranteed housing. That guarantee has been taken away after first year. It has more students than it can handle. I know that the Macmillan's ranking is very important to UBC. Maybe you need to hear from more students and parents of students.

Cindy Empson, Kincardine, Ont.

With neglect

It worries me that someone as seemingly intelligent as Michael Ignatieff would advocate using \$30 billion of software producer to dispose of the net wealth accumulated throughout one's lifetime ("With power?", Nov. 24). In my capacity as a financial planner, I always recommend that when thinking of taking the largess from my parents to instead pay the few hundred

dollars in legal fees (this can cover both spouses). People who prepare their own will tend to use imprecise or ambiguous language, or devise illegal distributions, or include clauses that can be easily challenged because they do not take into account family or succession law issues for the particular jurisdiction in which the estate will be settled. What you don't know can hurt and squander the estate more money in the end, hardly worth the savings.

Craig Stevenson, Waterloo, Ont.

Into Iraq

Alexandre Trudeau states that life is improving without Saddam's repressive regime ("Baghdad is blooming," Iraq, Dec. 1). But Iraqis would never know it reading the article. The image has been handed a new life on a silver platter. What does he call on them to assume personal responsibility for taking their own country out of its malaise? He is not doing the Iraqi people any favors by calling them victims of U.S. occupation. Who does Trudeau think is going to rise our Western civilization? Our boys know their mission there. Someone has to do the dirty work.

Bonnie Potash, Amherstburg, Ont.

University issues

One more point that was brought up in "Measuring excellence" (Gover, Nov. 17) was that the professor-student relationship is better last in our undergraduate students. I did the first year of my engineering degree at Malaya University College in 2001-2002. There I found that each one-on-one attention essential to learning. I got everything I possibly could out of my first year, which really pre-

“
Iraqis have been handed a new life on a silver platter. Our boys know their mission. Someone has to do the dirty work.



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Diane Krall's fingers dance across the piano keyboard with delicate grace and delicate power.

Her voice will pierce your heart with its gravelly texture in one moment, and then melt it with its sensual smoothness the next. She creates a sound that not only seduces the most sophisticated jazz purists, but has broadened the usual pleasure of pop audiences around the world. Her hits tend to linger at the top of the charts for months, not weeks, regardless of music trends. And at concert shows, her name is becoming a regular. Among the great divas of jazz, there is a new name: Diane Krall.



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MACLEAN'S BEHIND THE SCENES



EN GARDE!

In October, Canada's fencing team visited Havana, to compete in the World Championships. Maclean's Chief Photographer Peter Bregg, who also practises fencing, was on hand to capture our men's and women's teams in action.

Bregg volunteered to photograph the teams for the 2004 Canadian Fencing Federation calendar. He took the athletes around the city, shooting portraits on church steps, town squares and even in horse-drawn carriages. The calendar features both male and female portraits as well as action shots and can be purchased for \$15 by visiting www.anching.ca.

In the photo above, Montreal's Marc Hassoun displays his "fesch" technique—a movement where the fencer leaps forward and flies like an arrow to attack his opponent. "I was walking around with lights, cameras and a half dozen fencers in whites and weapons," says Bregg. "Because locals knew the world championships were taking place, people wanted to meet and be photographed with the fencers."

Bregg took up the sport four years ago after reading a Maclean's interview

in which actor Ralph Fiennes said he enjoyed being trained in fencing for a movie role. Bregg did some research and enrolled in a course for beginners.

Revenues from calendar sales will primarily be used for funding the Canadian national fencing team in their quest for Olympic qualification and medals.



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Politics | Paul Martin, the only new face that counts

Don't let the new faces distract you: the man to watch in this time of Ottawa regime change is the guy who was sworn in as Prime Minister. Sure, for the politically obsessed there's lots to pore over in the new cast of Paul Martin's first cabinet—and almost as much to mull in the surprising number of Jean Chretien veterans who survived. And don't be so quick to dismiss the diehard big players such as Scott Brison, the Toy who turned Liberal rather than work inside the new second-right Conservative party. But in all last week's who's-in-who's-out intrigue, a central fact was often lost: Martin has deserved a huge role for himself.

In a recognition announced with the cabinet, Canada's 21st prime minister took on a daunting range of responsibilities. No less than three parliamentary secretariats will report to him, on Canada-U.S. relations, science and small business, and more. Martin will also chair new cabinet committees on Aboriginal affairs, global affairs, and Canada-U.S. relations. And he's pulling ex-pertise that used to rest in departments

as the older ones: the now-canadian "devises" (Canada's newest) and with snake and eagle feathers, Martin will become, catch of the day

under his wing on the Privy Council Office—the federal bureaucracy's ingre' come. There'll be a new PCO Canada-U.S. secretary, as headed by Jonathan Arwell, previously a powerful Foreign Affairs official, and a new Aboriginal secretary. Arwell, Martin's getting his own paternalistic sounding national security adviser.

It all adds up to Martin taking close control of the issues that most concern him—a big change from Chretien, who had no interest in micromanaging. Not that Martin will be letting himself off the project. He's also restoring the old priorities and planning committee, a sort of inner cabinet that Chretien disbanded in 1993. Naturally, Martin will chair that agenda among club of senior ministers. Offering all the PM's clout, MPs will get more power—notably including U.S.-style review of Supreme Court appointments by a Commons committee. And Martin promises MP votes will shape new law as never before. Still, with his fingers in so many pies, there's no doubt who's the boss now.

JOHN GEDDES



Quote of the week | "I regard it as a death of the family." Former Progressive Conservative leader and ex-prime minister JOE CLARK says goodbye to the newly merged right to sit as an independent

ScoreCard

■ **Health**
Turner between education and development almost always ends up at Cost of Living. Government of Ontario "loading off" period, left gap in medicare payments now threatening to erode coverage terms, like a bridge to Nowhere Island.

■ **Finance**
Liberal devotes focus to SR, its single-line budget, as it's never been constrained was its first, Michael Moore, while fiscal models seem built by fiscal staff, for a generation of guys. Flory predicted that first election would be a John coalition.

■ **Science**
Conservative shuns climate change, science, research, says company no called its horizon a "blip" and forbids him to write it. PM rightists block spending from all but a few areas. But if Martin's science should come out itself that best?

■ **Aboriginal Affairs**
U.S.-long and the trip, which shuns our opponents: Germans, French, and the Canadian from the start. But the reality is a hallmark of that long German policy. Best issue is Asia, as countries sit on walls, telling U.S. "You take it, you fix it."

■ **Wrong from right**
NDP Scott Fraser gets to last very hard and aware. Liberal Joe Clark and Progressive and Conservative. The alliance leads four MPs to terms so they know \$1 million in federal campaign political issue tag is burning with an eye



FREE TRADE BLUES

Failure to reach global agreements has spurred a series of bilateral pacts

THE STARK MESSAGE was all the more startling because it came from such a surprising and authoritative source: frustrated with the lack of progress toward free world trade, nations are increasingly forging regional and bilateral trade pacts, partnering the globe with nearly 300 sophisticated treaties. This year alone, 12 deals have been signed; more are in negotiations and 13 others have been proposed. The source for the bleak news is more other than the 146-member World Trade Organization itself: the head of its trade policy review division, Chen Boenckamp, delivered an analysis of the state of global trade in mid November at the WTO's Geneva headquarters.

The march reinforced the worst fears of global trade advocates: the push toward unimpeded WTO deals covering everything from agricultural subsidies to investment is on the back burner. Probably for years. When the WTO was created in the mid-1990s, the great dream was that a world would grow beyond mere trade in goods, bring prosperity to all nations. But when the U.S. and the European Union refused to lower their huge agricultural subsidies at a WTO conference in Cancún, Mexico, in September, the push for deals in other sectors such as services also faltered.

True, senior officials are meeting this month in Geneva for more WTO talks. But free traders should not hold their breath. "The setback of negotiations at Cancún apparently precipitated the forging of more regional partnerships," says Boenckamp, adding that a proliferation of multiple pacts "may dampen enthusiasm for further

agreement at the multilateral level."

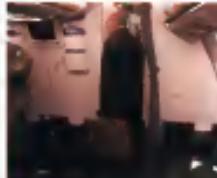
Officially, Canada is chipper. About everything. We refuse to be overtly pessimistic about Cancún. And, although talks among 34 hemisphere nations to create a Free Trade Area of the Americas also fell apart in Miami last month, we even maintain the FTAA deal will be signed in January 2005. "There are setbacks—but in all they are," says federal international trade spokesman André Léonard. But Léonard is also a realist: he notes our goals have been very ambitious so delay does not mean failure. WTO and FTAA talks could seriously resume after U.S. elections this next year. Maybe.

Meanwhile, Canada, like the U.S., is also negotiating bilateral pacts. At present, we have free trade deals with Chile, Costa Rica and Israel, along with NAFTA with the U.S. and Mexico. We are in negotiations with Singapore, four Central American nations and the four-nation European Free Trade Association, which includes Norway and a sleek, doorless Range Rover. As well, Léonard notes, we are "in talks but not officially negotiating" with the five Andean Community nations, the 15 Central American, the Dominican Republic and the European Union.

Perhaps this is the only way nations can proceed until the big guys, the EU and the U.S., lower their agricultural subsidies. Perhaps poorer nations, as well, will insist on bilateral deals until they realize the U.S. plays rough with little regard—and only realist groups can insist that trade laws are respected. Until then, bilateral deals are probably the only way our unadvised future "These are a lot of things wrong with that, but it keeps the forward momentum," says Bill Dyer and, executive director of the Ottawa-based Centre for Trade Policy and Law. The bottom line: like the cheery talk about the WTO and the FTAA with a grain of salt for now. And expect more fits and starts. Many regions are a political and policy water

minefield, so don't sign it can

FaceTime



The last smile

Jean Chrétien smiles for Ottawa, after his 10th at the Commonwealth meeting in Nigeria and a France-sponsored, champagne-filled dinner in his honour in Paris where he said all his promises.



Andy's dilemma

Having just shooting to the top of Paul Martin's new cabinet, Tony Blair's chief of staff, Denis O'Brien (left), is one of many faces in a reorganized Montreal human rights lawyer who is less interested in politics. But the 2005 election, he gets to be involved in, will get him to be involved in the search for a same-area merger with the determination of our nation.

Other newcomers to watch include Ottawa's well-preserved Geoff Regan at Tolentino, a coalition of Judy Sgro (now a senator), former Immigration and Minorities and Industrial competitor Lisa Fralick.



Left: former erratic political rocker, Maurice Bellemare, a 70s-style rock star, was the first to support Martin's leadership 10 years ago and something of a protege. Right: in his long off-the-radar years, he has made the back-bench rounds and part of the tabloids look to have gone the last mile to veteran Toronto MP Jim Peterman.

2004 LEARNED HONDA ACCORD



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that refuses to stand still.



AFGHANISTAN NATO's secretary general turned down a US request to take up more of the military load in Afghanistan, saying the organization was a steady assessment that, while in France Jean Chretien warned European leaders Canada would be pulling its troops out of Afghanistan next summer as planned and that Europe will have to pick up the slack.

Meanwhile, a stepped-up bombing campaign against Taliban remnants resulted in the deaths of 15 children and at least three civilians two separate incidents, the US military acknowledged. It also said the attacks turned up large caches of weapons.

RUSSIA Foreign observers cried foul as President Vladimir Putin's United Russia party used government-controlled TV and other resources to crush its Communist and liberal opposition and consolidate its already formidable hold on the Duma, the national legislature's lower house.

Two days after the election a Chechen radical bomber killed himself and five others in the very shadow of Red Square, one of the most secure districts in the heart of Moscow. It was the second suicide attack in a week.

IRAQ The US asked European countries to forgive their share of Iraq's outstanding debt, estimated at US\$125 billion. At the same time, it targeted and assassinated many

FURY

Five people in New Brunswick died, including a 24-year-old pregnant woman, in a severe December storm that snarled roads and snapped power lines in Atlantic Canada, which had already recovered from September's Hurricane Juan.



of these same countries by declaring that those who did not help with the war could not bid on reconstruction contracts. Blackballed were firms from France, Germany, Russia and Canada, which had largely built and co-Iraq in peace. By week's end, Washington seemed to be softening its position. Earlier, a suicide bomber injured 61 US soldiers and others in Iraq's al-Qaeda-style attack on a military compound near Mosul. Peacekeeping was also set back when nearly half of 700 new Iraqi army conscripts quit in protest over pay.

ZIMBABWE Parish leader Robert Mugabe pulled Zimbabwe from the 54 member Commonwealth rather than face prolonged suspension and numerous human rights abuses. In a vote last week, Canada supported the sanctions while 12 southern African members strongly deplored them.

BY GREG PERIN

Swearing in Ottawa...



HEALTH | SCIENCE

IMPAKTS The US Food and Drug Administration castrated pregnant women, nursing mothers and small children to limit their



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For those who are alone and vulnerable. For those whose tables are bare. For those who have lost their way - every drop in the kettle counts. This season alone, The Salvation Army will help over half a million people in Canada with food, clothing, and money to pay utility bills. Please make a difference this Christmas. Give generously to The Salvation Army Winter Appeal. And Get Behind The Shield.

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ounce of nuts and *shishito* to 12.oz. a week, the equivalent of about two or three small meals, because of high mercury levels. Control high-tar, the staple of school sandwiches, has less mercury than other varieties, the FDA also said.

EROLA U.S. army researchers have developed a vaccine that protects mice, at least, against the deadly Ebola virus, an Africa-based disease that causes uncontrollable hemorrhaging and is almost always lethal.

FLU Health officials and Canada still have adequate supplies of flu vaccine, but the U.S. is poised to draw on emergency reserves and is considering asking states for help after American vaccine makers quickly ran through their planned supply of 80 million doses. The U.S. outbreak has spread to at least 24 states and claimed the lives of 20 children.

MARS Three interplanetary space probes are to land on Mars next month, but a fourth,

Japan's trouble-prone \$12.5 million *Nisshin* orbiter, had to be abandoned so deep in outer space when its thrusters couldn't get it into orbit to fly properly. Aboard the *Nisshin* was Canada's first scientific instrument to extend beyond Earth's orbit, a plasma analyzer that was to measure solar wind.

CANADA

DRUGS Boston became the first large U.S. city and New Hampshire the first state to announce they would defy Washington and buy cheaper prescription drugs from Canadian pharmacies, part of a political rebellion south of the border that will almost certainly end up in court.

DOPING Federal officials stayed the prosecution of about 4,000 people charged with growing marijuana for their own use during a two-year period ending Oct. 7, a time when the Ontario Court of Appeal ruled Ottawa

was not doing enough to ensure an adequate medical supply.

Quebec police busted 25 minors, aged 13 to 17, for buying and selling marijuana at two high schools in small communities south of Montreal, part of a five-month-long investigation that involved nearly 100 officers. Police said some of those arrested thought the law was already changed to allow for possession of small quantities of grass.

DAILY Ottawa banned commercial fishing and oil and gas exploration in most of the St. Brieux Gully, a unique two-kilometer deep collection of underwater canyons off the coast of Nova Scotia. The rules were seen as a next-to-last step toward declaring the rare ecosystem a marine protected area.

TAKEOVER The Bay was in play as South Carolina corporate raider Jerry Zucker bought 10 per cent of retailer Hudson's Bay Co., Canada's oldest company, and said he was interested in acquiring a controlling share



HERO IN THE RUINS

A 27-year-old Costa Rican, Alejandro Cristóbal Solís, who was in Canada to learn English, appears to have given his life for a child when a construction accident caused the wall of a historic Romeo cinema

to collapse onto a neighborhood language school. Solís' body was found sheltering that of a 13-year-old Mexican boy, one of 14 people mangled as the 100-year-old Ipswich Theatre was being demolished. The accident is under investigation.

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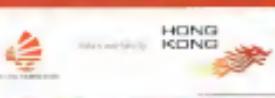
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UPFRONT

Mansbridge on the Record



THE THRILL WAS MINE

A trip across Canada is a reminder of the kindness that strangers often show

THE E-MAIL arrived amid the noise of messages that regularly come from writers across the country. In the most part, we hear from people concerned with an issue in the news, or our coverage of it. This was different.

It came just before we left on a tour to Newfoundland. Four smaller communities across the country. The e-mail was from a couple in Port de Grave, Nfld., a tiny, sparsely populated port community about an hour outside St. John's—the spot where we planned to just might end our trip. It was simple, yet delightful, an invitation for a dinner of roast beef with red-stuffed roulade. Touched by the thought, but knowing time wouldn't allow me to accept, I showed it to Rex Murphy, our expert on all things Newfoundland. He responded that it would have been a meal I'd never forget. But, he added in a delicate way, some ingredients, if I wasn't sure to have, could make me a "ruin in rotation." For a few days, still, it had been with a new offer—the handsomeness of strangers.

Newfoundland is well-known for that quality—never more evident than on Sept. 11, 2001, when the province played host to thousands of stranded tourists forced to land there when American airlines closed their airports during that day of terror. One can only imagine the tension aboard those jets, with passengers expecting to settle in the skies of New York, Chicago or Atlanta—between, in mind, at the wilderness that surrounds the waters of St. John's, Stephenville and Gander. But the people of Newfoundland opened their homes, put on impromptu dinners, and

held church-basement dinners—all of which made it a day to cherish. Many return in regular contact with their hosts, and have contributed thousands of dollars to purchase computers for schools and scholarships for needy students. It's an amazing story that doesn't get told enough about Canada-U.S. relations, and we can thank Newfoundlanders and their spirit of generosity for creating it.

While Newfoundlanders are distant, they aren't alone in showing compassion. At this time of year especially, you see that quality in many places. I was in a mall the other day and watched as a father guided his son into a store full of toys. But with that Christmas comes away, the father stayed to explain why an elderly lady, dressed in a crisp uniform and sitting near a bowl hanging from a chain in a food stand, was there. With an amazement, I saw a known pass into the boy's hand; he handed over to that hand and proudly dropped it into a pile of change and bills. As he handed back, he wore the look of disbelief well done, while his father knew he had just given a new meaning to a young person's Christmas. Again, the kindness of strangers.

One odd thing about being on television is that when you meet viewers, they look at you as one of their family. Some are even so gifted for a moment that you don't recognize them. My friend Lloyd Robertson, who's been at the network news game longer than just about anyone in North America, says he'll find it one of the most enduring parts of the business. In Port de Grave, just before the broadcast began, the e-mail couple came by our set. They wanted to drop off some home-made jam and say hello to someone they considered a friend.

They said it was a thrill to meet me, I told them the thrill was all mine.

Peter Mansbridge is Chief Correspondent of CBC Television news and Author of *The National*. To comment, lettersto@national.ca

Passages

WON Jeremy Wotherspoon, 27, glided to gold in two 500-m World Cup races, breaking Canadian records. The win in the Red Deer, Alta., slalom, for the lead in total number of men's World Cup victories, with retired racer Uwe Jena of Germany.

SELECTED Joe Handley, 66, is the new premier of the Northwest Territories. The former finance minister was acclaimed by the 19-seat legislature following his party's decision.

MARRIED Vancouver Island jazz diva Diana Krall, 39, took off to England for a quiet wedding with her beau, rock musician Elton Costello, 49. About 150 people were invited to the event at Elton John's estate near London, including Canadian ones Paula Wallin and Paul McCartney. It's Krall's first marriage and Costello's third.

STILLING Under the radar, Oscar-winning actress Gwyneth Paltrow, 31, married Coldplay frontman Chris Martin, 36, in a secret ceremony in California. They're expecting their first child in the summer.

APPOINTED Jim Munson was made a Library Senator by his boss, Jean Chretien. Let go by CTV in a purge, the 57-year-old former broadcast journalist was Chretien's press secretary for the past 16 months.

DIED Griff newscaster Denis Harvey, former editor-in-chief of the Toronto Star, executive editor of the Montreal Gazette and a vice-president at CBC-TV, died of a heart attack at 74.

CABIN paris legend Rubin Gaxiola, the bairn and star of the 1996 *Beverly Hills Social Club* recordings, died of respiratory and kidney failure in Houston at 84.

MISSING The legendary Merritt of Gully Lake, Willard Kitchener MacDonald, 87, an unclaimed dead after his friends reported him missing for almost two weeks. MacDonald lived in seclusion in northern Nova Scotia since the 1940s and had been ill. A search party was unable to find him.



THE TRUTH ABOUT CHRISTMAS

The holiday has travelled a long and winding road to become the most emotion-laden day of the year

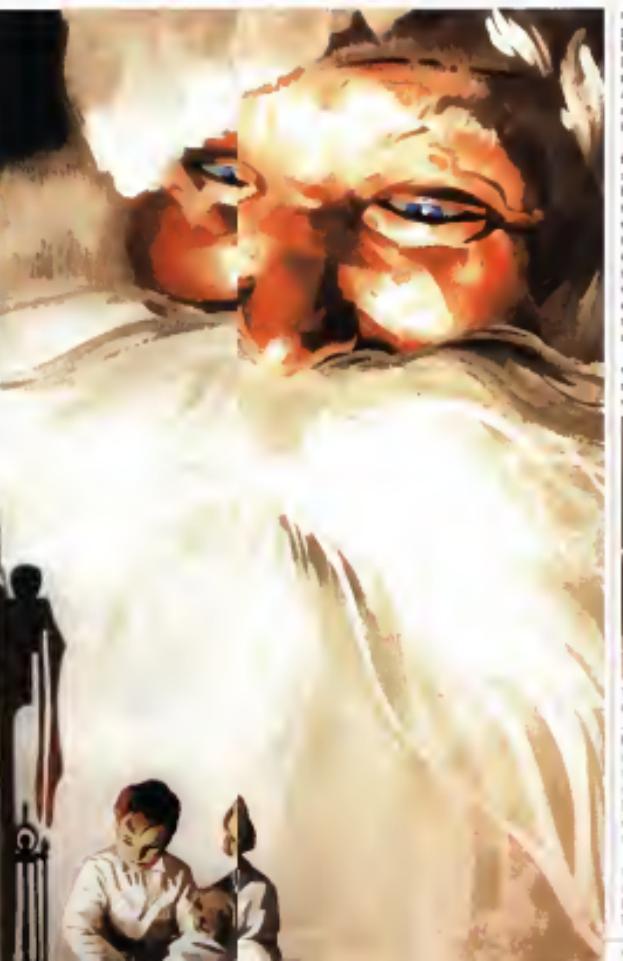
THERE ARE OTHER DAYS studded across the Western calendar now, reflective of newer, more secular passions in what was once Christendom: commemorations of national independence, of revolutionary struggles, of bloody wars. Even for those Christians who still find their primary identity more in their faith than their nationality, class or ethnicity, Easter is more spiritually important than Christmas. For 150 years we've decried the holiday's frenzied consumerism, more recently—and more quietly—we've begun to acknowledge its cost in depression and suicide. We've done our best to infantilize Christmas into a celebration of Santa Claus, to the extent that the sanctuarial theology of Hollywood

Christmas movies make medieval peasant superstition look sophisticated.

No matter, Christians not only endure, it rules. No other day of the year is so pregnant with meaning and emotion as is a spectrum of modern society. Christmas, in fact, is no longer just for Christians. In the watches-and-wards arenas of the Harry Potter novels, where absolutely no one can say the religiously-foul, Christmas is second only to Halloween on the calendar. In its way the co-opting of Christmas—God Incarnate as man—by non-Christians simply mirrors Christianity's own absorption of ancient pagan practice into its ranks. Everything old is new again.

The roots of Christian custom stretch far earlier than the birth of Christ. Across the northern hemisphere, where most of the world's population has always lived, early civilizations all marked the winter solstice—the return of light and hope—in some fashion. From the ancient Near East to northern Europe there was feasting, visit beavers, and gift giving. The end of December was a perfect time for celebration in pre-modern Europe. Cards were slaughtered so they would not have to be fed during the winter. For many people, it was the only time they had a supply of fresh meat. In addition, wine and beer made during the year was finally fermented and ready for drinking.

In the Roman Empire, when nascent Christianity struggled to establish itself, a half-day in honour of Saturn, the god of agriculture, began in the week leading up to the winter



solstice, which in Rome occurred on Dec. 25. Food and drink were plentiful, and Roman social order was turned upside down. Slave became master and masters, while businesses and schools were closed. Early Christians took no part in these self-consumed festivities since, they defined themselves in opposition to their cultural surroundings. And, as an event of cosmic significance, the birth of Jesus paled by side, but reborn as Easter. Nor was there any agreement, since the Gospels don't give a date, on when Jesus was born.

By the late second century, different groups of believers had different ideas. Jan. 6 and April 19 or 20, May 20 and Nov. 18 were all proposed. But in the next century those dates were challenged by implications drawn from an already-hallowed day: March 25, the spring equinox, was thought to be the day of the creation of the world and the day Christ was crucified. Church fathers also believed that the Old Testament prophets lived a "whole" number of years, dying on their birthdays, since God's perfection did not permit the impregnation of righteous souls. In order to give a similarly whole number of years in human form, March 25 became the Feast of the Annunciation, when the Archangel Gabriel told Mary she was to bear the son of God. And if Jesus was conceived then, nine months in the womb gave a birthday of Dec. 25.

That timing was also part of Christianity's quest for legitimacy with pagan迷意识形态. In 274, the Emperor Aurelian made the solstice the feast of the Invincible Sun, a new chief god of Rome who was the symbol of imperial authority. By 356, when a Roman imperial edict gave the first clear reference to a Christmas celebrated on Dec. 25, Christianity was on its way to becoming the state religion, and Christmas an offshoot. But although theological writers crafted unusually beautiful rituals and hymns to the Christ child, many of the popular pagan customs of the season now adhered to Christmas.

As the Ancient World passed into the Middle Ages, believers would both attend church and celebrate amid a boisterous atmosphere from New Year's Eve or Mardi Gras through mid-Christmas. A poor man or student would be crowned "king of misrule," while other celebrants played his subjects. The poor would go to the houses of the rich and demand food and drink, with Halloween-like retaliation for those who didn't put out. The medieval world added some gentle touches of its own, from visits to manger scenes, and the belief that all creation stops on Christmas Eve, with animals knelling and plates bowing in honour of the Christ child. In parts of Europe today, baby animals are still brought to cradling mass.

The sort of extreme Biblical piety offered Reformation Protestants almost snuffed out celebration excess. Puritans outlawed Christmas during their reign of Puritanical Britain and New England. Even after the ban was lifted, Puritan children remained muted. In Protestant countries—Congregationalism remained an outlier on



The 19th century reinvented Christmas as a family celebration

Dec. 25, 1789, in first Christmas under the United States' new constitution. But whether distained or embraced, sacred or profane, the Christmas masses built up over time that a reindeer were primarily public and communal. The reindeer Christmas of the 19th century, the forerunner of ours, was the opposite—an essentially private and family celebration.

Modern Christmas arose then from a synthesis of forces: an expanding middle class with time and resources to lavish on its children, a Christian Christian drive to stifle the public excesses of the season, and Christmas's burgeoning commercial importance. Pop culture helped considerably. Charles Dickens' classic tale of goodwill toward all, *A Christmas Carol* (1843), painted those who didn't celebrate the day as envious and ungrateful. Clement Moore's 1823 poem, "The Night Before Christmas," completed the transformation of the semi-legendary St. Nicholas, who brought good children gifts on his feast day of Dec. 6, into the entirely fictional Santa Claus, who did the same on Christmas Eve. By the time Coca-Cola used its Huldon Sundblom depicted Santa as a portly grandfather with a ruddy complexion in 1931, his image, too, was complete.

Protestant Americans and Canadians once suspicious of Christmas began to embrace it as the perfect family holiday, borrowing rituals from the array of emerging customs they found around them. Queen Victoria's German consort, Prince Albert, introduced the Christmas tree to the British Empire, but the American middle class adopted German customs on its own—in the excess that the evergreen tree, real or fake, is now the quintessential Christmas ornament. Greeting cards, festive lights and gift giving with a vengeance—especially for children—also caught on, and Christmas spending quickly became vital to the economy.

The family-Christmas connection has marked the holiday ever since, for good or ill, a message reinforced by everything from sermons to classic films. It's also firing a belief that takes spiritual and emotional power from the birth of a child. For Christians, of course, that child was their savior, but you don't have to be devout to see hope personified in a reindeer babe—or to enjoy your own family in a time of weakening religiosity. Furthermore, it's those aspects of Christmas that tug us most strongly, and make it the Western world's pre-eminent day.

MOMMY, IS SANTA JESUS'S UNCLE?

For non-believers and non-churchgoers, PATRICIA PEARSON writes, the holiday brings tricky questions

AS CHRISTMAS APPROACHES this year, my six-year-old daughter is still trying to sort out some relationship issues. To wit: Is Santa Claus not Jesus's uncle, then what exactly is his connection to Jesus's birthday celebration? And if Mary is the mother of Jesus, then who is the mother of God Himself? And how can Joseph not be God, if he is, according to every crèche and pageant Clara has ever seen, Mary's husband and Jesus's father? I sympathize with her confusion, and try to answer her questions as best I can. The Santa connection has been challenging for me. At one point, I ventured that he was also known as St. Nicholas, an

important saint to God several hundred years ago, who lived and died in ... Then I clapped my hand to my mouth. "It's dead?" my daughter asked in horror. "No, never mind. I didn't know that. I just meant that Santa is God's helper!"

Getting it straight for Clara is tricky, for I am a lapsed and unorthodox Christian. I don't know who some of the principal characters in the Bible are, and I cannot come to a consumed sense of conviction in my heart that God exists. Nevertheless, I found myself, during, when Clara was three or four, that she understood Christmas to be an exceptionally lucky day, upon which 10 newborn animals and three dolls arrived in bright packages, along with a sack ruffed with treats, her grandparents and a turkey dinner, all for no apparent reason. "Shouldn't we carry some sense of spiritual purpose?" I asked my husband. "Well, she has faith in Santa Claus," he pointed out, drudging. "That, of course, is true. While I failed to take Clara and her little brother to church when they were very young, Santa made his presence robustly known on billboards and in TV commercials and videos such as *Home for Christmas*. My children—whose capacity for reverence seems infinite—do believe in Santa Claus, and until I finally attempted to instill in them the true meaning,

ONE friend explains
Christmas as something
like Martin Luther King
Day, honouring Jesus as an
exemplary social reformer





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of the holiday, they figured that Santa was to the season d'lime. Christmas was the day when this very plump man would barrel down the chimney and deposit the presents they'd requested when they sat on his knee in the Eaton Centre three weeks earlier. To all intents and purposes, Santa was the FedEx guy. "Delivery for you, lad?"

Considering the rich complexity of world religions and ancient traditions, this is a rather uncharming state of affairs. But it's also quite prevalent among secular Canadians. Over the year, I have chatted with a number of my friends and acquaintances. One explains Christmas as something along the lines of Santa, Lucifer King Day, and the like. Another Jesus. An unapologetic social reformer. "Glaisterland! I have no faith in a god," he says. "But we feel guilty about totally abandoning the intention of the event, so we try to say that Jesus is great because he was the first pacifist, son of the first advocate for the underprivileged—but we take all the God stuff out." Children pick up various little fragments about Jesus's connection to Christmas from the broader culture, however, the way they absorb random pieces of information about pop stars and movies seen "Forcing daughter," another friend told me, "Jesus like Michael Jackson. She knows at one time he was famous for something, but she doesn't know what. She tells me, 'Maybe Michael Jesus he was born an Christmas day!'" He laughed. I understood the irony.

When I first tried to asaphor Jesus to my daughter, she asked me

Ric Bremstock and Richard Martimer's children, Isobel and Zachary Martimer, don't celebrate Christmas, but enjoy checking out the lights

if Santa had brought Jesus presents when he was born. "No," I said, "The Three Wise Men did, they each had a present for him." "Who were the Wise Men?" she asked. "Uh . . . Help! Someone give me a quick refrresher course!" They were smart people," I opined, hoping that I sounded authoritative. "Wise is another word for smart." An absurd vision sprang to mind of Jesus being presented with gifts by Stephen Hawking and Bill Gates. "They were wise," I added, "because they knew that Jesus was born, and that he was very important." Reasonably, she probed. "But they gave him toys?" "You know what? They did not give him toys, actually, they gave him frankincense and myrrh . . . and I can't remember, something else, but I can't because it's a smelly perfume kind of thing, and the other one is an herb." "C'm on," she whined, as if I was completely mad. "Why didn't they give him a car?"

My response was to take her to a Christ-

was present at our local Anglican church. This was a man, I felt, in going her a service she could follow about the holiday. Unfortunately, she was so thunderstruck by the revelation that King Herod ordered all the male babies killed after Jesus was born that the rest of the tale flew right by her, and I had to spend several hours trying to get down the concept of fest.

Training children in faith when you have no idea what you're talking about is a challenge for laicized Christians, consider how awkward it can be for non-Christians, who are pressed to account for the Christmas season simply because it is in their faces. But I learned, a Jewish filmmaker in Toronto, managed to convince her son, Zachary, that the lit-up trees and twinkling reindeer on the lawn around her neighbourhood belonged to a different group of people, who had different customs and held different

UNTIL I guiltily attempted to instruct my kids on the true meaning of the holiday, they figured Santa was the raison d'être

beliefs, which Zachary incorporated in the context of sports names. At Hanukkah, as he helped his grandmother—a Holocaust survivor—light the menorah, he suddenly did a double take, and said, "Bobbe, are you Jewish too?" When she nodded, he exclaimed: "No way! So are we!" on the same night!

The Muslim community seems to have several approaches to the issue. Last year, a *flat-craped* version, Toronto Muslims, when an e-mail newsletter was circulated by an employee at the Khalid bin Al-Walid Mosque in Toronto, stating that Christians should not be wished a "Merry Christmas" because supporting non-Muslim beliefs "is like condoning or supporting the drinking of wine, or marrying someone or having their sexual relation and an on."

Needless to say, this sparked a public debate, with condemnation expressed by members of the Muslim Canadian Congress, which denounced the view as bigoted in an article in the *Toronto Star*. It also necessitated a discussion about how to be faithful to Mohammed without alienating friends and co-workers, particularly for new immigrants who are conscious of trying to fit into

NON-CHRISTIANS AND YULETIDE SPIRIT

KEEP CHRIST IN CHRISTMAS

Gurnatt Grewal and his wife, Norinder, both 45, moved to Canada from Liberia in 1981 with sons Jay, now 26, and Lloyd, 18. Gurnatt, Canadian Alliance MP for Surrey Central, and a Sikh, made a case in the Commons last year for keeping Christianity in Christmas. Gurnatt firmly believes they're keeping Christ out of Christmas. Christmas is about Christians, and they should have liberty to celebrate the way they want. In fact, I celebrate with them. I go to Christmas dinner, I enjoy it and my family enjoys it. We have freedom of religion and expression here—that's what makes Canada one of the world's best countries. Curiously that freedom is a cause I don't appreciate: like all religious festivals, Christmas gives us an opportunity to renew feelings and beliefs, to think about the purpose of life, and to thank God for all the good things we have.

Jay Grewal: It kind of burns some eyes when I say I'm celebrating Christmas, with a tree set up. But Christmas only leaves the same values as the majority of religions.

'LIKE ALL religious festivals, Christmas gives us an opportunity to thank God for all the good things we have'

IT'S ALL FOR THE CHILDREN

Edwin Loong, 33, of Burnaby, an information officer with the B.C. Securities Commission, is a Canadian of Chinese descent. He and his accomplished wife, Sei Zheng, also 33, are raising Patrick, 6, Amelia, 3, and Isaly, 18 months.

Edwin Loong: When I was growing up, Christmas was not about religion but more about integrating into Canadian society. You'd see everyone else in the neighbourhood putting up lights, setting up trees, and we, like other Chinese in Kamloops, followed suit because we wanted to belong. My mother took me to the mall to see Santa, like any other lad, for the requisite photo. Now, Christmas is the key holiday for us. Chinese New Year would be a bigger deal for my wife and my parents. I do want my kids to understand where they come from and what kind of culture we have. But I married into a large extended family which now includes seven children, so celebrating Christmas with the kids and seeing how happy they are with the presents is a very big deal. My family really enjoys Christmas as a secular celebration, but we sprinkle in a few traditions of our own. It can be as simple as adding some Chinese dishes to Christmas dinner or for the parents, while everyone else digs into the turkey and sauce.



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their new world. One notes that the Muslim Web site SaadFarsouf.com has advised advice on how to deal with office Christian partners and school events, particularly when they take place—on their heavy-duty—during Ramadan, the Muslim month of fasting. Tarek Fatah, one of the founders of the Muslim Council in Congress, told me that he celebrated Christmas for his children when they were young as a way of being part in his community. "We even had a Christmas tree. We found no contradiction between our faith as Muslims and passing our neighbours and community on their most joyous day of the year. My wife, my daughter too and I never said 'Merry Christmas' when we celebrated any religious festival, be it Hindu, Muslim, Jewish, Druze or Kristen. 'To those who make a fuss about religious holidays, I say, get a life.'

Fatah's perspective converges with that of

HOW children handle conflicting narratives about God is an interesting issue within interfaith families

Bethlehem: But I also believe that Jesus was one of God's prophets, an atheist Muslim do, so my kids are comfortable with the idea that Christians are spiritually a gathering. Another Baha'i, Collin Smith of Dunton, Okla., took the same approach when his kids were little—they're now in their 20s. "Our children were four and seven years old when I became a Baha'i," he says. "As we believe that Jesus was a manifestation of God, it seemed natural to continue to celebrate his birth as well as introducing the celebration of Baha'i holy days into our lives. Our children believed in Santa Claus, as many children do, and continued to receive gifts from Santa until they no longer believed. The focus of our family celebrations has always been on being together as a family to celebrate the holy day

with as little emphasis as possible on the commercial side of the season."

How children handle conflicting narratives about God is an interesting issue with interfaith families. "My daughter accepts that there are at least two versions of God," says a Jewish friend whose espousal in Christian. "She doesn't seem bothered by that, though I'm not sure how she perceives the difference between what I believe and what her father believes. She just seems comfortable with dualities, the way that she accepts that her parents have different houses."

Another Jewish friend has told her daughter that "everyone has their own way to get to God." She has made it clear Daddy believes in Baby Jesus being the Son of God, since he is a Catholic, whereas the mom does not. "The most important thing," she says to her daughter, "is what you believe inside yourself."

CHRISTMAS IN THE WAKE OF RAMADAN

Mohammed Khan and his wife, Sharmeen, settled in Mississauga, Ont., after immigrating from Pakistan 30 years ago. Now 45, Khan has raised three children, Fatima, 24, Iman, 23, and Rehmat, 21, on his income as a taxi driver. A devout Muslim, he prays as many as five times a day in his car and studies university Islamic-Mathematics. His wife, Sharmeen, and the couple's three children are Muslims. As when Christmas comes, we don't exchange gifts or anything like that. Ramadan ended about two weeks ago and, believe me, by the time it's over you don't feel the need to do anything for Christmas. But when the time comes to celebrate our own holidays, we do give the kids some cash, which they can use to buy anything they want. And they'll usually give small gifts to their close friends, their teachers or whatever, as they're not left out of the gift-exchange tradition. Every year for the past 30 years, we've celebrated Muslim holidays with the whole family. It could be at my place, my brother's place or my sister's place. We'll sit down together as we can chat and joke around and all those sorts of things. There are lots of us—about 30 or 40, so it can get pretty crazy. As for Christmas Day, well, I usually work straight through. Somebody has to serve the public, you know!



THE FIRST NOEL

Shayang Wang, 34, his wife, Qiao Qiao, 34, and their eight-year-old son, Tiancheng Wang, came to Toronto from Shenzhen, China six months ago. Shayang is a free lance IT consultant for various companies. Shayang Wang: In China we don't celebrate Christmas. We don't have a Christmas tree—Chinese New Year—which is the most important thing for Chinese people. We receive gifts that don't prepare a lot of food. Most Chinese people here don't celebrate Christmas. You will not get up in the morning. This will be my first Christmas, as well as my son's. He asked me not to buy him anything. He understands our current situation. We just moved here, and for a long time I didn't have a job. He understands that it's a hard time for many of us who just came to Canada. We want to be the Santa Claus Parade. We don't have that type of thing in China. It was very fun and interesting. There were so many people it was hard to see everything. I had my son on my shoulders; it was huge. In China the government does not let the people have any parades unless they're government-approved. Maybe every five years in Beijing, they might have a parade. This type of thing would be illegal in China.



'TIS THE SEASON TO CONNECT WITH PEOPLE

The Arora are practising Hindus in Palgrave, Ont., an hour's drive northwest of Toronto. Parveen, 46, runs Wazir Informatics, a home audio and cinema company. He and his wife, the rapper Shanti, 40, are raising daughter Vanya, eight, and son Guratan, four. Parveen: Aranya: My wife and I immigrated to Canada from India as children, and our parents had to do a lot more explaining to us than we've had to do with our kids. Having lived their whole lives here, they're very much aware of Canadian culture and religious practices, as well as South Asian ones. They've grown up in an environment where everything is celebrated, but now they're getting to an age where we'll have to explain the history and the religious side of Christmas. Hinduism is such a huge melting pot, but in our small corner of it, a unity of faith is one of the strengths, so it's not foreign to us to discuss the practices of another faith. Even before the kids, we exchanged gifts a lot and some of us travel one—will go to a Christmas concert at the Church of the Redeemer. In our own temples Christmas is celebrated, because it's a terminal event for another religion. Gift-giving is only important now because of the kids, but the important part of the season is to get together. Life is so busy, and Christmas provides a wake-up call to renew connections with people.



HAVING A BLAST

DANYLO HAWALESHKA goes on manoeuvres with some of Canada's army reservists

THERE'S NOTHING quite like the deafening roar of turbines of machine guns fire to focus your attention. Well spent about two hours setting out a bridge for an ambush. Wind-whipped clouds—stragglers from the snowstorm that blackened the forest and fields the night before—left the moonlight in a tremor. A bright wind sang our fears and my fear was riotously growing number from string around the dimpled. The platoon of reservists skulking in the shrubbery—infantry-infantry in the 4th Highlanders of Canada—were poised for their planned assault when the bright white flash of a distant mortar rolled lit up the night sky like fireworks, signaling the attack had begun.

We expected enemy soldiers firing the military across to retreat across our bridge. Platoon commander Lance Kiri Karpinski had ordered his men—and three women—to hold their fire until he started the ambush with a burst from his own rifle. I forget all about the cold when the soldiers across the road caught sight of the earing fire and let loose with a C-46 general purpose machine gun capable of firing up to 16 rounds per minute. The night's only blackness is that concealed the machine-gunner and soldier feeding him ammunition was broken back by the orange bursts of flame from the weapon's muzzle. The firefight was on.

Darkly, there was only suspense. The enemy were like members of the 4th, and everyone fired themselves blank. But it was easy to imagine what could have been. Had this been real, the guys crossing the bridge would have been cut down. And Canadian army reservists could easily find themselves in the

heat of fire. Some 15,599 supplement the 21,000 regular forces, with a further 3,000 to be added over the next 20 years. Today there are more reservists serving Canada overseas than at any time since the Korean War. 27,600 fought, 109 in Afghanistan, and a handful in missions in places like Sierra Leone and Congo. They make up about 15 per cent of the Canadian Forces now based in foreign lands. These part-time soldiers sacrifice their vacation time to volunteer for extended military training, and leave jobs or school to serve abroad.

Some join because they like guns. Others crave the discipline. Others admire what they describe as the noble role played by Canadian peacekeepers. Regardless of motivation, they willingly spend weekends cold and wet, away from family, as they did last



month when Major Captain Geoff Photographic Peter Stagg and me along to one of the 48th's monthly training exercises.

The bridge ambush was staged near Meaford, Ont., about 150 km northeast of Toronto. The training exercise began on a Friday evening, with about 30 infantry members assembled at the Mississauga Armoury in downtown Toronto, home to the 4th Highlanders. The word "infantry" comes from infusio, Italian for youth. How appropriate. Some of these kids didn't look old enough to play with toy guns, and yet they handled real weapons with aplomb.

"I see the military as an essential component of a nation," said Lt.-Col. Ian Sergeant, head of the 4th Highlanders. While full-time soldiers have the advantage of regular training, he said, reservists also perform admirably. Sergeant, 38, who works for an on-line brokerage at a major bank, added that nine members of the 21 48th Highlanders currently serving overseas "have all been positive."

The task at hand that Friday night was to sign our weapons and ready the gear. Most soldiers received a C7 rifle and five 30-round magazines (the soldiers get blank ammunition issued in the field). The Roy-

yang men and women actually volunteer to spend their weekends in the cold and wet.

Major Morell, 28, scolded on the floor in the armoury's purple hall, looked up from a menu, serving, or "individual meal pack" he was helping to lug, and tried to explain what he was doing. "I'm field-testing my M77," he said. My blank expression told Morell, a Canada Customs officer during the war, "I didn't have a clue what he just said. "I'm taking out all the extra

Canadian Reservist from CFB Petawawa northwest of Ottawa. He is married, has a one-year-old girl, and is studying electronic control systems at college. He joined the reserves at the age of 17. "I wanted to go to Korea," he explained. "I wanted to be a paratrooper. They started just and honorable, and I always wanted to be like that."

The two coaches ferrying the troops north from the city slowed down as the sun turned to set, sticky snow. We stopped a car in the ditch. "It looks so cold out there," said a voice from the back of the bus.

Cpl. Adam Pruday, 26, instead tried himself. He argued in three voices ago: "It's really a good led when I was growing up," he acknowledged. While Pruday, a visual arts major, enjoys the regimental comradeship "We joke around, we go to bootcamp," he said, "but when it comes to doing the job, we're professional."

At 2 a.m. we arrived at the training grounds, but the bus wouldn't get up a hill. We waited for a few hours. "Medium Logistic Vehicle Wheeled," or ML, for short (who names these things?)—big green truck with a tarp covering the back, had to the 58th. When the truck came, we moved the com-

TODAY there are more part-time soldiers serving Canada overseas than at any time since the Korean War

judges I can fit in onto my backpack,"

Master Cpl. Clifford Part, 26, drew the short straw and had to lug his gear and the weekend. We were assigned to history, along with these privates and a corporal. Part spent the summer of 2001 in Bosnia, part of Puma Company, 3rd Battalion, Royal



comfortable masscoach, to be blazed by the howling monsoon. Mercifully, someone had an up-to-five-star tent that would sleep seven that we'd need. A gas-stove and lantern kept the interior comfortably warm. But it was chaotic, boozey and wet sloshing everywhere. Still, at 4:30 a.m. sleep came quickly.

We were up at 7:45 a.m. It wouldn't find any wool longer than my socks and started to pine. After digging around for about five minutes, I found them. Then, a knot for my borrowed army parka slipped out of the web harness I was wearing to carry gear. A soldier found it later, lying in the snow. I began to feel the headache for this story should read "Saving Private Dan (honor himself)"

The practice mission required the plane to attack an observation post, then move on to the bridge. The soldiers were decked out in their "white"—camouflage clothing that included white berets. A five-man reconnaissance team, armed with rifles, had set up before us. We had crawled through waist and uneven fields for about an hour when Master Werner Officer Paul Melby, an observer, delivered the news. "The reccie patrol that was supposed to be here isn't," he reported. "The enemy attacked."

It's only an exercise, but it's easy to imagine what could happen in the real life of life.

them and they've died now," McIntyre, 31, is a amateur runner with his own fitness company. "We don't know what's out there now," McIntyre shrugged. "It means we have to be more cautious."

The passenger spotted an enemy truck, he seemed to be trying to creeping off into the woods away from the vehicle. I decided, unexplicably, it would be all right to wander.

SOME of these kids didn't look old enough to play with toy guns, and yet they handled lethal weaponry with a coolness that would make a grown-up nervous.

over and frustrate with the enemy. The next thing I saw under attack. It's not a wise feeling. One group of soldiers swarmed toward a tent to my right, while about eight others raced down the track. I knew the rounds were blanks, but it was anyone's guess, so I moved to put the track between me and the

advancing, shouting hoard. Out of the corner of my eye I saw a soldier running towards me with a grenade. It landed just behind me. BOOM! (Even simulated grenades are very

load.] The soldier took the truck home on capture and one prisoner, "Um, what's the idea with you throwing that grenade at me?" asked the soldier whose rifle was pointed at us, "just follow your orders, sir." Right then.

offered conservative criticism. Then, on his last day remaining, they all piled onto buses and returned to their civilian lives. Many of those soldiers will never leave outside of Canada. Others plan to, or have already put themselves at risk in the name of their country. Some, like I am, have considered transfers to the regular forces. He's even started the paperwork a couple of times, but he knows that means that they will snap you from your family for months at a time take a toll. "I'm kind of scared," said Tom. "I've seen what it does to guys. I've seen them lose their marriages over it, and I don't think that's going to happen to me." Some sacrifices are too great even for good soldiers.





THE TROOPS GO TO TOWN

The Canadian Forces descend on Sherbrooke, Que., for exercises

IT WAS A SIGHT TO SEE. Some 2,300 Canadian troops and 300 military vehicles went to Sherbrooke, Que., on Nov. 30 for a week-long training camp in preparation for a six-month peacekeeping mission in Kabul. Over the course of the week, they took part in a number of scenarios: breaking into a prison, rescuing hostages from crashed helicopters, and protecting a mobile Canadian embassy from a suicide bomber. The armed troops also patrolled through town in armoured vehicles, and practiced defending against rocket attacks.

But they also took part in community activities and projects. Among other things, soldiers joined forces with the Huntingdon Community Church to build a hockey rink—perhaps that most Canadian of man-made vices. "It's a win-win," said Maj. Richard Soudan, who heads CMC— the Civil Military Co-operation unit. "My team has to be integrated in a civilian population and the city benefits from projects that stay in place." That approach, the military hopes, will also help the troops in Kabul, where they must win over locals by trying to improve the quality of life for Afghans and helping to bring stability to a long-suffering nation.

Residents of Sherbrooke, meanwhile, seemed relatively unbothered by the military activity. With the exception of a protest by some 150 opponents of Canadian troops in Afghanistan, civilians went about their daily affairs rather nonchalantly. Of the troops, one store employee said, "If they spend money, it's good, and good publicity for Sherbrooke—but people won't even remember this by next week."

For more photos, visit www.usatoday.com/gallery

The troops stayed here on 2,300 soldiers and 300 military vehicles



In advance of Irving's visit to Kebet, the troops installed a perimeter of defense, they against rocket attacks, and protected a truck Canadian convoy from a possible invasion. But their job, beyond that, intersected with the citizens, and even helped in fueling a hockey riot.



LABOUR'S LOVE LOST

In the new Quebec, big unions are coming under siege, writes BENOIT AUBIN

DENYS ARMAND'S LATEST hit movie, *The Barbarian Invasions*, is a moribund, sprawling (and demented) satire plaguing the public health care system—and a remarkable example of artistic prowess, too. In the movie, flabby, aging baby-boomer (read: "old Quebec") in dying of cancer in an overflowing hospital ward, tended by nurses who are overworked, rude and demoralized. At the same time, a part of the hospital is closed off for lack of operating budgets, thanks, in good part, to a labour union whose leaders are degenerate as they run the ward like a racket, oblivious of everything but their own selfish inter-

ests. Remy's son, Sébastien—who speaks English all the time and has made money trading commodities in London ("new Quebec")—hates both union and management and is preparing a way to his old man can die with dignity.

The fictional plot is now echoed by a real-life drama unfolding at Saint-Charles-Borromée hospital, a long-term care unit for disabled patients in Montreal. Media reports of patients being neglected, abused and psychologically tortured by staff members

have escalated into the biggest scandal to rock the province's problem-laden health care system in years. Here too, relatives had to become involved to help a patient, suffering repeated episodes of staff misconduct to the press, after filing official complaints that led nowhere. The drama soon turned into a tragedy when the hospital's director, Louis Lafleur, committed suicide in a suburban

house soon, leaving behind a letter taking some responsibility, but assiduously blaming others and The System for the problems.

In a tragicomic choice of writing strategy, union spokesman Sylvain Robitaille called on the media to get off the hospital's case, accusing them of amplifying things. This, after it was disclosed that two columnists—of whom a union executive member—were suspended for a mere two days for their remarks. Public outrage erupted on talk radio and in letters to the editor. Finally last week, Health Minister Philippe Couillard fired the hospital's board of directors, placed the institution under trusteeship, and named a special trouble-shooting director who has 120 days to straighten the institution out.

Couillard urged the comment to note that he knew that similar cases of patient abuse occur elsewhere. Pointedly, he urged patients,

The number of patients was impressive, but the rhetoric has been toned down.

staff and managers to "break the code of silence" pressure throughout the system, an order that "protects a hard-core minority of bad employees." And he urged everyone to "speak out, in better bases." Decidedly *versus* at the core of the problem paradigm, the health-care system is a weak authority that has alienated its nurse-leading union rule. The Quebec Denis-Armand diagnosis, precisely. And, as it happens, Premier Jean Charest pointed, too.

The scandal could not possibly have happened at a worse political moment for the province's trade unions—traditionally, the most politically involved in Canada. It broke right in the middle of an increasingly contentious labour campaign opposing the Liberal premier's "conservative" agenda. In pre-Saint-Charles-Borromée days, the unions had cracked up the rhetoric and organized a series of almost strikes, some of them disruptive and violent, to prevent the government's plan to "re-engineer" the way the public sector works and is governed.

Henri Massé, leader of the Quebec Federation of Labour, promised that his union would "fight like pigs," while another leader warned of "nuclear war." Confederation des syndicats autonomes Claude Chabot was accused the Liberal government of planning to "destroy Quebec." Union commanders organized riding offices of Liberal politicians in Montreal and the Gatineau, destroying files and equipment. They stormed the Sainte-Justine hospital for kids children in Montreal to disrupt a planned public appearance by Charest, and staged large demonstrations of up to 30,000 in Quebec City.

The unions take exception to three bills currently being debated in the National Assembly. One aims to change the way some health services are provided, another aims to reduce the number of union accreditations in the health care system. A third would bring changes to the province's labour code and open the door to outsourcing jobs now performed by unionized public sector employees. Charest has vowed to use a gag order in the National Assembly, if necessary, to see the bills become law before



A hospital director's suicide might blamed the System for the latest health-care scandal

Christians. Since June, some 430,000 public sector employees in Quebec have been without a work agreement. Talks are due to get underway early next year.

There, in the middle of this mess, the Saint-Charles-Borromée scandal broke. It soon became apparent that the unions might have started the public mood. A recent CROP opinion poll indicated that 59 per cent of Quebecers oppose transferring some government services to the private sector, and that a majority would also give the nod to outsourcing and to user fees as ways of curbing the current level of services without raising taxes. In short, Charest's campaign platform in the April election.

The unions quickly toned down their

HE'S not making friends on the left, but Charest stoked down labour over its claim to talk 'in the name of the people'

plans, no more vandalism, a more thawing of a "fight to the finish," no more accusing the government of "neopopulism, social peace." Last week, they were criticizing the government's "lack of openness" and "failure to dialogue" instead.

The reiteration of the unions' so-called

public mobilization campaign was billed to be a "day of massive disruption" aimed for late Thursday. It was an impressive display—there were demonstrations everywhere in the province. Transit was disrupted in Montreal and Quebec City, ports were closed all along the St. Lawrence River, daycare centres were shut, roads to existing regions were blocked by unions. But, mindful of the violent possibility, many had expected much worse.

Back in the '70s the Quebec unions, fuelled by Marxist ideology, talked of "destroying the system to liberate the people." Quebec labour similarly pushed as nationalist-supranational agenda and an struggle for progressive measures, and was able to play both into a shift of political clout unparalleled in Canada. But now, with a Liberal conservative, federalist government in power, and neo-liberal fervour in the coal, these unions appear, to an increasing number of voters, as part of The System themselves—the "social consensus" so dear to the Parti Québécois—a system Charest has promised to overhaul.

The premier certainly did not increase his popularity on the left last week, but he was able to stoke down labour over its claim to talk "in the name of the people." But labour, even stripped of its nationalist-popular grandstanding, was able to mount an impressive display of anger and mobilization.

So, the first meeting ended in a draw, with new Quebec and old Quebec at loggerheads. It will be a long, hot winter here.

PHOTOGRAPH BY STEPHEN SCHADE



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'That's *Obasan's* home'

In August, revealed Joy Kogawa decided on a will to sell the Vancouver neighbourhood where she lived for the first seven years of her life. She hadn't been back since 1942—the year the federal government confiscated the home and interned her and her family, along with thousands of other Japanese Canadians, during the Second World War. Kogawa, 88, couldn't remember the exact address, but she knew the house when she saw it—and it was for sale. That discovery led to a chain of events that is still unfolding. An ad hoc committee was formed to purchase the bungalow, the model for one of the settings in *Obasan*, her acclaimed 1981 novel about the internment. But before the group, which has members from across Canada, could raise enough money, some

one else bought the house and started renovations—without a permit. Nevertheless, the committee still hopes to find a way to save the house officially designated a historic site and eventually convert it into a literary centre. Committee member Linda Ohana (below), a Vancouver filmmaker, discusses the house's importance.

The committee's been trying to put some light on the house, above its historical and cultural significance. We want the new owner to realize that more than just a handful of people care about the property. We were told that she was interested in selling it but basically as is, but 13 windows were taken out. They were the square, old-fashioned-type windows that make the character of the

house. The ground level was gutted except for the structural beams. So a lot of work was done in a couple of days before we noticed it and the stop-work order was put on.

She Marpole sees that it's in was home to a lot of Japanese-Canadian families before the war. Joy has brought that whole subject of what happened to the Japanese Canadians to the forefront in her literary work. So the house is a symbol—not only for Joy, but I think for our whole community—that our history makes it important enough to be saved for future reference. And it's important not only to the Japanese-Canadian community, but to all Canadian writers. To them, *That's Obasan's Home*. So to sell the house up as a cultural and literary centre would be recognizing those things.



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POLAR BEAR HAVEN

The beasts frolic in Canada's only Arctic seaport

IT IS A STRANGE excursion, it feels so much that we have bled off, but that the ground has dropped away. The hulking meadows sweep across the tundra, over a land that is both barren and beautiful. Along the shores of Hudson Bay, shabby iron forests are taking hold. Winter is setting in, and on the expansive emptiness below, soft spectral shapes are on the move. Usurp everything. The world's largest land carnivore. Map to the Great White Bear.

The flight path takes us above several oversized structures, older to poor fibres and failed

debris, arranged like board game pieces: an abandoned trailer, a rusted truck, a giant pair of tandem golf balls, the rusting hull of the MV *Ithaca*, marron in shallow waters just offshore, and a C-46 transport plane that has become lodged in the landscape. "It only landed almost 25 years ago," says Scott deWitt, our amorphously young pilot, speaking through the headphones. "You one was killed or anything. Great place for names in the survivors."

And now, coming in quickly are the chartered busses of Churchill, Man., a small gridwork of streets that looks almost suburban from afar, as incorporate an unique

as any sunken ship or crashed plane. And just beyond it, rising up a slab of concrete, sits the moath keeping grain normal. That is where one of Canada's most northerly railwaymen's winter rules, and a sure law of man-made rules, to the terminal docks. Churchill is the narrow end of the funnel, through which flows western wheat via the shortcut that is Hudson Bay. "Last ship of the season," says Scott, indicating a lonely vessel that is plowing its way towards

board through the cold waters of the bay. These three elements—the port, the railway and the grain terminal—converged in the 1930s to create the modern town of

stone fortress, its walls splayed out in the classic star formation of French imperial defenses. *Caudan-Voerhees*, Luxembourg, Prince of Wales Fortress. Constructed by the *Elshofen Bay Company* in the 1700s to protect its foraging routes from French attacks, Prince of Wales Fortress took 40 long years to build—only to fall without a shot being fired after French warships appeared in 1782. The fort's governor, General *Macane*, took a quick tally—approximately 400 seasoned French troops versus 350 HBC employees—and wisely decided against an *Alexander-style* last stand.

Heine surrendered and was taken prisoner along with his men. The French then looted the post and blew up whole sections of the walls, leaving little food or shelter for the Cree who fought in and who had come to rely on HBC supplies. That winter, scores of Cree and Metis would starve to death, among them Heine's beloved wife, Mary Norman. Heine had begged in French captors to leave supplies and remuneration behind for the Native population, and the French had complied, but it was not nearly enough. When Heine returned to Churchill the following year, having been released by the French, he abandoned the cannibalistic post forms and took a replacement at Portage la Prairie.

Several lanterns are lit instead, beyond the reach of salt tides, where the water would always be fresh.

Samuel Hearne was one of the most remarkable figures in early Canadian history. He was a brilliant governor of Fort Ross, but he had distinguished himself by walking to the Arctic Ocean and back, a distance of 5,600 miles, across the Barren Lands through one bowing Arctic winter. Hearne deserved because he adopted Native techniques of travel, diet and dress. And more importantly, his expedition was headed by the learned Dr. John Ross, Naturalist.

WHAT IS Churchill?
A northern boondoggle?
A bulwark? Ask any three
people and you will get
four different answers.

Hearne was searching for a fabled copper mine and an equally fabled passage to the Orient; he found neither and returned a Prince of Wales Fort wiser, but certainly a richer. The stone walls have since been repaired and the cannons re-armed. It is a solid geometric presence in a stark and

"We may not be landing after all," Scott says. He points to the snow in front of

forests. "Bear tracks" every summer, as the ice melts on Hudson Bay, hundreds of polar bears are forced to the east of Churchill, where they are fat, hungry and ill-tempered, for the ice to reappear in fall. (Given a choice, most polar bears would stay on the ice all year round, excepting a few males.) From mid- to late November, when the sea ice begins to form, the area around Cape Churchill is the first to freeze over. The bears congregate there, and in soon as possible make their break out onto the ice.

The town of Churchill lies smack dab in the middle of the polar bears' migration path. Bear traps ring the townsite, bear patrols are on constant alert and children go to school wearing loaded armed escorts. ("They go up anything they like at Halloween," a lady told me, "except polar bears!")

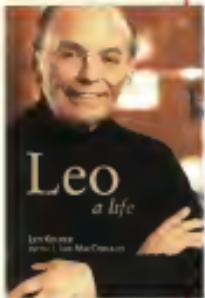
rance of Wales. Fort is closed during polar bear season, and the river, ice ridded and unpredictable, can't be crossed by boat. So the only way to visit it by helicopter. Accompanying me is Stacey Jack, a Parks Canada communications manager, and Jackie Schmitz with Parks Canada, who will also accompany our "polar bear hearing." Judson's rule has not jangly. *Minotaur*? I would really prefer "polar bear defender" or "ice bear fighter." *Minotaur* seems too *as in*, as in, "Here comes the polar bear! And it's going to eat Ferguson." The bear has now caught up to Mr. Ferguson and appears to be attacking him. "We will continue to monitor this situation as it unfolds."

Happily, Jadon is armed with a rifle. "A running shot first. Then we run like hell for chopper," is how I interpret the Impor Safety Information that I receive. After a spotter has trudged over the hill, he drags it down to scan the area and makes sure no predators are lurking about. Only one does he land and let us out.

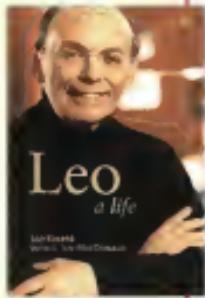
Stacie slings her rifle over her shoulder and we trudge through the snow toward the fort. Stacey unlocks the heavy front doors and we open with a groan and we enter this fort. Here are Samuel Heame's private quarters, here the blacksmith shop, here the cannons pointing outwards toward invisible enemies. Looking down the sight-



"[Kolber] shares insights into the Robertson family and ... is unusually indelicate for a member of the establishment." *National Post*



"In a lifetime of mingling with everyone from Pierre Elliott Trudeau to Frank Strata, Leo Kolber has become one of Canada's most powerful people." *Maclean's*



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Will Ferguson's Canada | >

line of one such sinner. I find that it is aimed directly at the greatest mind, the one formulation squaring off across the mouth of the Churchill River.

Stacey's a wonderful guide—full of quips and quirky facts. And Jackie is easy-eyed and confident, just the sort of thing you want in a polar bear mentor. As we walk through the blinding blizzard of the most famous, our talk turns to Sloop Cove, several kilometers to the south, where the HBC used to dock its boats. The glaciers that had once pushed the Hudson Bay lowlands down with such overwhelming might retreated 8,000 years ago, but the land itself is still rebounding, moving slowly like a squashed sponge after a weight has been lifted. "It's called isostatic rebound," says Stacey. "The land is rising about half a centimetre a year. At Sloop Cove, the harbour is now a meadow and the iron mooring rings where they tied the boats are even higher up than

they had at safety, farther along the coast."

Later, I spent three days out on the ice less waters east of Churchill as part of a Roamers North Adventure tour. Normally, when you put the words "bombers," "north" and "adventure" in the same sentence, you are setting yourself up for disappointment. But no. Three days on the tundra and it still wasn't enough. I want to go back.

I had been invited on this trip by Catherine Sesard, the author of a wonderful guide book to Manitoba's wildlife areas led "Polar Bear." "We're staying at a lodge," Catherine said, when I first arrived. "Lodge can just as range from a精英 to a marsh mallows and outdoor hot tubs. The group I was with slept in bunk beds, linked up like train cars, with many a bickering night. No matter. We spent our days in buggies that rolled across the landscape in giant cartoon wheels, bobbing and bouncing. We were meowing the bears as they own our feet. Real bears. In the wild."

There were a dozen or so people in our moon buggy. Other than Catherine and the driver, I was the only Canadian in the group—which may or may not say something about us as a country. The rest were mostly American or British, our buggy guide was from New Zealand and there was even someone from Mexico on board, shivering away with good cheer. "We saw dozens of bears—sparring, playing, sleeping—and it never lost its magic. The bears moved across the tundra with a silence that was both on cueing and exhilarating, shoulders rattling, paws padding, heads low. They are surely unimpressed by man." "This is their realm," Catherine said. "We are merely intruders." "That, and a potential source of protein," she added, with a laugh. "Polar bears can weigh up to 800 kg—as much as a small car—and they have been known to hunt and kill whales, mind you."

It was on my second day with the buggy that I was plucked from the mounds by Scott and flown to the fort. On the flight back, over stranded ships and overused nuclear一枚, I looked at the ice fortressing the tundra. Ray-green sheets of ice. Bears were moving along the shore, cautious, timorous, fearless. Like the landscape they inhabit, they too seemed larger than life.

This is the final installment of "Will Ferguson's Canada." For more on Ferguson, visit his Web site at www.mqup.ca.



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TV OR NOT TV?

Lured by new technologies, Canadians are on a home-entertainment binge



YOUR TV has died, sensible wifing out of the vents at the back. Or it suddenly looks too small in the spacious new family room you added to the house. Or maybe you've decided the old model's not a good enough home-entertainment hub. Whatever, you have to buy a new one, but if you haven't been in an electronics store lately, that purchase isn't going to be as easy as it used to be. In fact, you are going to be confused. There is a vast array of choices, each with an acronym—LCD, CRT, DLP and so on—that differentiates one from preferable technology from another. Those differences have a big impact on the performance of a given TV, but choices are, most people don't understand half of what the 17-year-old sales lady tells them.

That doesn't stop them from opening their wallets, though. There were 2.1 million TVs sold in Canada last year, and sales of TVs and related audio/video equipment jumped to \$4.5 billion in 2002 from \$3.2 billion in 1998. Thanks to rapid technological advances, new models keep being added to already full product lines offering everything from inexpensive but still decent sets with stylish plasma screens selling for up to \$25,000. So unless you're willing to plunk enormous flats on the advice of a salesperson, you have to do some research to ensure you get what you want.

Mike Barry knows how tough it is to navigate through the retail jungle. When the value on his 15-year-old set went on the fritz last summer, the Aurora, Ont., man started searching for a replacement with a budget of \$2,000. "It was really frustrating at times," says Barry, a 47-year-old sales manager with McCain Foods. "No two TVs have all the same features. Each has something a little different, and that little something always costs a bit more money."

Barry became so disillusioned that after

With plenty to choose from, consumers spent \$4.5 billion in 2002 on TVs and related gear.



The Medical POSTING

Mediterranean diet good for the arteries

Researchers think they know why eating Mediterranean-style lowers the risk of heart disease—the diet is associated with lower levels of inflammation in the arteries.

Inflammation is thought to be a key part of the process leading toatherosclerosis, or hardening of the arteries, and increased heart attacks and strokes.

To see whether inflammation could explain the heart-health benefits, researchers measured levels of C-reactive protein, a chemical in the blood associated with inflammation.

They recruited nearly 7,500 men and women ages 18 to 89 years who did not have heart disease and measured their diets with a nutritional questionnaire.

Participants who more closely followed a Mediterranean diet had lower levels of C-reactive protein.

The association remained even after the researchers accounted for other factors that might influence the results, such as age, obesity and physical activity.

Researchers admit they cannot yet say the findings are evidence for causality, but they do have reason to believe that there may be a link between the Mediterranean diet and inflammation and lower cardiovascular disease risk.

Battling the winter blues

Winter depression is the most common form of seasonal affective disorder, a form of depression that occurs at the same time each year.

One of the treatments is light therapy, which involves sitting in front of a light that mimics the spectrum from the sun. The traditional form uses a "light box" containing white fluorescent tubes covered with a plastic screen that blocks ultraviolet rays.

A new device called the Lightbox could make light therapy more convenient, especially for people on the road.



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FYI

It is estimated that every day, approximately 375 Canadians are diagnosed with cancer and another 181 die from it.

(Source: National Cancer Leadership Board)

The Lightbox uses light-emitting diodes rather than the fluorescent light of the standard light box. Because of that, they can make it very small, so it is a very portable device—for use on a bus.

The device produces only half the light intensity of a light box, but designers say it should be just as effective. The only question is: that intensity is how long one needs to use it. Anecdotal evidence suggests 30 minutes of daily exposure will be enough with the Lightbox—which is about the same as for standard light boxes.

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two months and too many silences, he goes up—much to the chagrin of his three kids. It was only after winning a management job at his golf club and attending a few industry picnics with his constituents that he finally made a decision. "I pulled out my cellphone on the way home," he says, "and told the salesgirl it'd be the next morning with my credit card." The liquid courage resulted in a 45-inch, rear-projection, HDTV-ready Samsung that he's been sitting pretty in his family's new room. "It fit well for the price," Barry laughs. "I'll probably still be looking."

Why all the indecision? Only a couple of years ago, choosing a new TV would have focused on two things—screen size and price. Now you must choose between two screen shapes—the standard, square (4:3) model, or the new (16:9) units that allow viewers to see the widescreen version of DVDs or high-definition programming. And to get HDTV, you'll have to pay extra for a TV capable of receiving the signal. Most networks are already delivering some HDTV programming, which offers an extraordinarily good, wide-angle picture. Screens of older TVs needn't worry yet—most programs are still produced with analog technology.

Then there are the types of screens. Major retailers generally stock a range that includes traditional picture tubes, flat screens, front- and rear-projection screens, DLPs and flat panels (LCDs and plasmas). "Our customers spend a lot of time doing research on the Internet," says Stephen de Weerd, whose family-owned Electrohouse in Toronto focus on a high-end clientele. "But even then, I spend a lot of time explaining new technology to customers." Each design has its pros and cons, and while not in everyone's budget, the cost of LCDs and plasmas is steadily declining, tempting more buyers. Industry estimates suggest Canadian sales of high-end flat panels in 2005 will be more than double the previous year's total, and that 2004 growth will double again.

And that is dramatically changing the market. Big-screen units had been the rage, but now flat-panels are the cockpit design to have hanging from your wall. Michael Selsky, vice-president of strategic marketing and advertising with Burnaby, B.C.-based Best Buy Canada, says that shift is due to the cost coming down, increased selection and a massive industry advertising campaign. But others say the sleek screens' popularity is

NOT YOUR USUAL TV GUIDE

When it's time to buy a new set, it pays to know one from another

THE UNIT	THE TECHNOLOGY	THE PROS	THE CONS
DIRECT-VIEW CRT	The "classic" cathode-ray tube. Picture is formed directly on the back of glass tube. Screen is curved.	Cheap, decent picture, familiar technology—it's the TV you grew up with.	Heavy and takes up a lot of space. Not all units are HDTV-ready.
REAR-PROJECTION DLP	System using Texas Instruments' DLP digital light-processing technology.	Thinner, offers better image quality than conventional front-projection TVs.	Pricier than traditional CRT and LCD front projection.
FRONT PROJECTION	Cooling-resistant unit projects light onto a wall or screen.	Great for big home theater. Very wide screen. Projector takes up no floor space.	Requires ladders in brightly lit rooms. Average image quality.
FLAT-PANEL LCD	Current is passed through tiny liquid crystal pixels, similar to the technology used in a laptop computer's screen.	Not susceptible to "bleeding" of moving objects (less plasma). Very thin design, sharp picture.	Expensive, available in limited sizes. Fast-moving objects on screen can have a "stutter" effect.
FLAT-PANEL PLASMA	Positive charges stimulate packets of gas.	Only inches thick, available in large screen sizes. Great colour saturation and sharp picture from any viewing angle.	Easily and fragile. Picture size fixed over time. Can also suffer "burn-in" or "ghosting" images (e.g. the network logo in the corner can become semi-permanently embedded).

partly driven by another major trend—home decors. "Women are attracted to the LCD and plasma TVs because of how they look and because they don't dominate a room," says Tom Marano, general manager of consumer display products with Sony of Cana-

da Ltd. "We're also finding that some people buy LCDs and plasmas and use them off. They treat them like a piece of art."

Ken Eley, general manager of Consumer Electronics Marketers of Canada, argues that the high-end TV craze is driven by people installing home theatres (minus the game under the sofa, of course). "Once you had a sofa was a 12-inch box with flashing pictures," says Eley, whose organization represents national electronics sales. "In the past you'd watch a movie. Now, with the new technology, you experience a movie." Once, that is, you've chosen which of the many new TVs to "experience" it on.

**'IN THE PAST,
you'd watch a movie.
Now, with the new
technology, you
experience a movie.'**

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GOLD THAT GLITTERS NOT

Maintaining a stimulus policy while the economy grows is very risky

IF YOUR TEENAGE daughter finally kicked unhealthily nibbling habits at the dinner table after years of futile, heartbreaking, and costly attempts, you'd surely wait a while before suggesting the Atkins Diet to hand off obesity. That seems to be Alan Greenspan's economically unhealthy view, as he continues to lend money to the central bank equivalent of those same dietitians. Despite efforts to get people to buy their dough to sell it, Greenspan is pricing his money at near-Depression levels to prevent, he says, the onset of deflation. Until spring, that's when global inventories and central bankers fended off more than SARS.

Deflation had been niggling the Japanese economy for years, was nipping respiration in China and was popping up around the world. Central bankers, led by Greenspan, assumed wised-up investors and politicians that they'd do what was necessary to head it off. Step forward the only thing that's not out of deflation was to bring back inflation.

That is the dilemma now facing the Fed. In May, Greenspan publicly expressed such fear of deflation that the bond market went into a final, organic spasm, driving long-term rates to insensate levels. The yield on the benchmark 10-year treasury bond fell to a mere 3.11 per cent. Anybody buying bonds at that price was betting inflation wouldn't return before 2012.

Since then, the new inflation has been raised. Prices of raw materials and goods continue to soften, under the weight of intense pressure from the voraciousness of China, Japan and South Korea. Services costs, such as health care, lawyers' fees and college tuition, keep climbing rapidly but the big news has been the surge in commodity prices. Oil and gas prices have been strong for two years, and this year they've been joined by base metals, meats, soybeans and cotton. For central bankers, the ominous price leap has come from gold. When the crude US\$80 billion market, that was a warning that the rise in the price system had moved from deflation back to inflation, orders. Greenspan and other central bankers moved decisively.

The Bank of Canada must be really unhappy. Everytime, Greenspan has been dumping the nation's gold reserves with the de-

mission of a divorced husband digging up photos of his ex-mother-in-law. For that gold, accumulated over generations, it's being given nearly US\$800 billion buying treasury bonds to hold down the essentials. The Alberta buck lost 20 per cent this year against the currency Canada, America's biggest trading partner. This drop was a shock both to Greenspan and to those Canadian businesspeople who, just months ago, were predicting the loonie would sink to a wimpy grave.

Greenspan's insistence on inflation with deflation. So don't expect there to respond to US\$800 gold with sprightly telling us that gold, famously the most reliable of inflation indicators, is sounding the alarm. Those whose business is printing money look at gold the way manufacturers of artificial Christmas trees look at those deflated, fire-prone, needle-strewn garments: we can do it better than God.

Paradoxically, the one important central

GREENSPAN'S monetary policy is the equivalent of providing virtually free beer in unlimited quantities to recently reformed alcoholics

banker who has enjoyed gold's value is an inflation hater is Greenspan. He's a disciple of Hyman Minsky and has for years cited the falling price of gold as proof that his monetary policies were working brilliantly. And so they do. Since he got his job in 1987, inflation has been tamed from the frightening to the worrisome to the merely negligible, as shown by the fall in gold prices from US\$8,500 per ounce to US\$325. Even when gold rebounded to US\$732.5, we were given no argument that was a score high.

Maybe Greenspan should have quit while he was ahead. The paper he prints is not

just losing value against gold. It's losing against almost every other currency in the world's marketplace—and that's only because China has a per cent more than US\$8100 billion buying treasury bonds to hold down the essentials. The Alberta buck lost 20 per cent this year against the currency Canada, America's biggest trading partner. This drop was a shock both to Greenspan and to those Canadian businesspeople who, just months ago, were predicting the loonie would sink to a wimpy grave.

Greenspan insists his policies won't bring back inflation, even though he leads our country at the usherend of price-as-the-gold-the-growth rate of the economy (one per cent versus the 8.2 per cent annualized growth the US showed up in the third-quarter). That is the monetary equivalent of providing virtually free beer in unlimited quantities to recently reformed alcoholics. What makes gold's recent leap so scary for him is that it came as the dollar went to new lows despite a powerful surging American economic activity. The Wall Street economists have long tried to another by proving that the descent of the dollar and the rise of gold would end, once the US got back to its old inflation ways. "It will," they asserted, "would want to own the cure when the US is once again showing its economic health to Europe."

The euro has joined gold in going to a seven-year high even as the US was responsible for some of the best economic numbers since the Reagan recovery. At today's US\$800, gold is saying that Greenspan is playing with fire by maintaining stimulus in a time of a strengthening economy. But, he says, "It's the reason to be jolly, and the friendly face in the Fed's punch bowl round over."

Donald Core is chairman of Harris Investment Management in Chicago and of Harris-based Amherst Investors, www.harris-invest.com

THE ART OF 'BEING THERE'

The painter, whose latest work is about to tour Canada, reflects on finding his 'voice'

HE LIVES and paints in small-town Nova Scotia. But there's nothing provincial about Alex Colville, arguably Canada's greatest living painter. The young artist from Amherst, N.S., joined the army in 1942; in 1948, he was one of three painters admitted to Germany's Bergen-Belsen concentration camp as it was being liberated. After returning to Canada, Colville taught art at Mount Allison University in Sackville, N.B., for 17 years, raised a family and eventually moved to the leafy college town of Wolfville, N.S. Along the way he created some of the scenes can-vasos to grace gallery-screens that seem like straightforward depictions of ordinary life at first, but gradually suggest a darker sensibility. At 83, Colville is hardly breaking in the saturated landscape, an exhibition of his work of the past decade, which was at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia from Sept. 27 until Nov. 30, is about to begin a cross-country tour, starting at the Beaverbrook Art Gallery in Fredericton on Dec. 21, that will last until early 2005. Martin's Atlantic Bureau Chief John Del Dekker recently spoke with Colville at his home.

How different is this canvas work?

Picasso had a blue period, a rose period and then the beginning of the abstract stuff. I don't think you'll see this kind of episodic transformation stuff in my work. As a war artist I brought my experience to the person who wanted to be a novelist and works at a newspaper as a young guy or was an who reports actions at the courts. One is simply reporting. Back in Ottawa [after the war], I did that thing called *factory*, *war* *Nympen*, *Holland*, which was an attempt at a summary, what does that mean? One of the things was to speed up in a certain. You're compelled to think, "What if I am dead tomorrow?"

In 1950, I did a painting called *Wife and Dauphin*. I think when I painted that military scene, I thought, "This is it, I'm getting somewhere." When I finished *Wife and Dauphin* I said, "Now I sense that I'm lead-

off on to something"—what people in literature and poetry speak of as a poet finding their voice.

How would you describe that voice?

It's hard to say. Obviously one of its central pre-occupations is sex and women in general. But around that same time the art censor at the New Brunswick Museum in Saint John came to see my studio and he said, "Oh, I think that's very good, and how much do you want for it?" I said \$300. "That's a big price for me." That was the first real sale, and it's a guy whose judgment I respected. In the current dominantly sociable atmosphere of Canadian culture, people think that if you get a Canada Council grant that is wonderful. For an artist there is nothing so satisfying as someone coming to you and saying, "I like what you have done. How much is it?"

Was there ever a moment when you questioned whether realism was the way to go?

There's a kind of geometric structure in my work, which is, in its bare form, abstract and has some, as a kind of skeleton. But after I have sometimes said to me, "You must have had an abstract period," and the answer is, "No, I simply didn't."

A significant number of your paintings are reproduced in Germany. Why is that?

The Germans are very interested in philosophy and so am I. My view of life is perhaps more like the German one. I think that human beings are capable of sensible things, so do the Germans.

These disquieting things people see in your paintings, then, reflect your view of the world?

Yes. In my work I am trying to do things that are a kind of statement of what it is like to be alive. I have read Heidegger's *Being and Time* and he has that strong sense of being there. A fairly recent painting of mine is called *Surrey*. I have a friend in California, a writer, and I sent him a photograph

of this painting. He said it looks like the woman is looking close in and far out. This phrase appeals to me very much.

So in your paintings you are trying to find a moment, a distillation of what it is to be human?

That is what Heidegger calls being there. The two things are being and time. The sense of being is enhanced by a sense of time—this knowledge that we don't have forever. I actually think there are some people to whom it never occurs that soon they won't be here, but that's very true. So being is enhanced by this sense of time. And it is also enhanced by knowing how bad things can be and that this moment is OK.

Do you think being far from the centre geographically has allowed you more easily to go your own way artistically than if you had been in Toronto or somewhere larger?

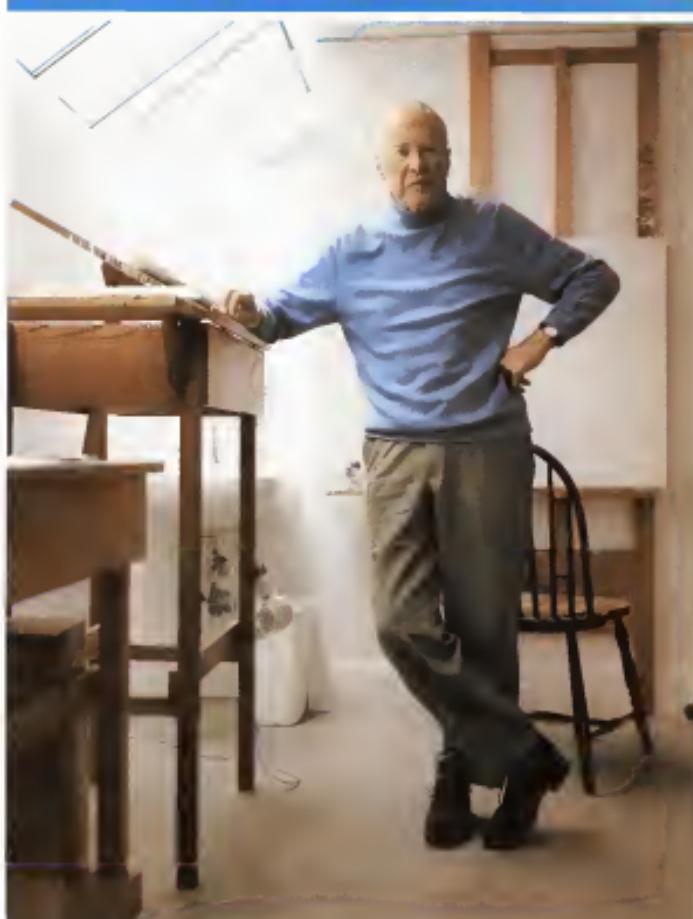
I think so. I haven't in general enjoyed the company of other artists. That's one of the things I realized in this time working in Ottawa with the other war artists after the war. We would meet in the middle of morning and afternoon for tea and coffee and I thought: "I don't like this. I never again want to find myself in this kind of arrangement. I don't want to stop now and talk to people who in most cases I don't find particularly interesting." Also I didn't like the idea of people looking at each other's work.

When people go to the new exhibit, will they see an artistic summary of your career?

I would rather people saw my work one at a time. That's why I like the idea of a person owning something of mine in their house or office. That's one kind of satisfying to me.

At your age, do you think about the historical aspect of your work?

I do to some degree. I like to think that I am "in there." It's not in a sense that an artist lives through his work. Your work lasts longer than you do, with any kind of luck.



COLONY OF LOST BLONDS

DNA tests shed light on whether or not Norsemen assimilated with Inuit

WHEN MANITOBA born explorer Vilhjálmur Stefansson completed a four year expedition to the Arctic in 1912, he returned with a startling tale that surprised the world. On remote Victoria Island, Stefansson had spent time with the so-called Copper Inuit, some of whom had blond hair, blue eyes or other分明ly European features. Since the island's Inuit had little or no known prior contact with whites, Stefansson, himself (the son of Icelandic immigrants), speculated that they might be descendants of a lost colony of Norsemen that had settled in Greenland around 1000 and then vanished without a trace 450 years later. "New Race Solves Mystery of the Ages," ran a typical headline at the time in the *New York Times*.

Stefansson later complained his discovery had been badly misrepresented. Media reports claimed he had found "a herd of 1,000 white people" when, in fact, Stefansson's journal entries noted that "if something less than 1,000 persons, (for) more have blue eyes," while a few had light-brown beards and must-red hair. No matter, Stefansson's bold hypothesis—which he never retracted—drove ridicule from many in the scientific establishment. It was the first of several controversies that, in Canada at least, cast a shadow over his remarkable achievement as an explorer. In the United States, by contrast, Stefansson enjoyed celebrity and lifelong career as an Arctic scholar and dilettante. After his death at age 82 in Hanover, N.H., in 1962, Stefansson's gravestone proclaimed him a "Prophet of the North," a fitting epithet, especially since he was so often without honor at home.



This may finally be changing. A new documentary by Toronto-based White Pine Pictures, *Arctic Dreamer: The Laurel Guards of Vilhjálmur Stefansson*, premiered at the Montreal World Film Festival in the fall and will air on History Television in February. Arctic Dreamer does not shy away from the darker chapters of Stefansson's career, including his possible culpability in the deaths of more than a dozen of his recruits. But it also confirms Stefansson's status as a visionary who discovered and charted for Canada thousands of square kilometers of new land as far from emerging from over-the-pole air flights to under ice submersibles. A similarly balanced approach is taken

These Victoria Island Copper Eskimos were the basis of a sensational 1912 theory.

by Icelandic anthropologist Gísli Pálsson, whose second book on Stefansson, a biography, *Arctic Dreamer: The Laurel Guards of Vilhjálmur Stefansson*, was published last month in Iceland. Pálsson and Ágúst Ólafsson, a genetics expert at the University of Iceland, have also raised Stefansson's most controversial theory. Over the past two years, they called on hundreds of thousands from Inuit on Victoria Island and Greenland. In the end, their DNA study showed the skeptics of nearly a century ago were probably right: the genetic evidence does not support Stefansson's conjecture that Norsemen somehow assimilated with the Inuit after travel that would have taken one, or both of their peoples, over thousands of kilometers of inhospitable tundra and sea ice.

Despite those findings, the fact the study was undertaken reflects the renewed inter-

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one in a man who, four decades after his death, remains something of an enigma. Almost alone among explorers of his era, Stefansson championed the Inuit as "a pure race." He learned their language, adopted their diet and travelled more than 35,000 km by dog sled during the course of three expeditions between 1908 and 1918. Yet this was the same man who raised a son, Alex, with his last mistress, Annie Parrygahuk, but never publicly acknowledged either his son's existence or his consequential relationship with the boy's mother.

Alex died in 1965, four years after his father, whose he had not seen or heard from in more than 40 years. Alex, a hunter and guide, had six children, all of them still living in the North. In a recent interview with MacLean's, the 81-year-old Baffin Islander, Rose Albert Stefansson, 59, a language teacher from Inuvik, recalled how the harsh and harrowing circumstances were to the explorer, saying they were sorry he never married there. Stefansson did not answer the letters. "I guess he just wanted to forget he had a family up here," says Rose.

Precisely, observes Palsson. "For Stefansson to have returned to 'civilization' as he put it, and acknowledged an Inuit family in the field, would have been a professional catastrophe in those days," says his biographer. And Stefansson was, above all, an ardent romantic.

Born in 1879 in Arnes, Man., Stefansson was inspired in Norse legend as a child. He later attended the University of North Dakota and Iowa before heading to Harvard Divinity School in 1903. After switching to anthropology, Stefansson headed north for the first time in 1906 and quickly fell in love with everything about the Arctic. He concluded, quite correctly, that any earlier explorer had perished because of their stubborn refusal to adopt Inuit ways of eating, dressing and travelling. Stefansson boasted that, within months of his arrival, he was "far colder than bear, to his skin."

While on Herschel Island in 1907, Stefansson met a colourful trader, Charlie Klemberg, who reported seeing Inuit with blonde hair and blue eyes on Victoria Island. Stefansson, already speculating about a Norse connection, was determined to be the first white man to study them in detail. He did just that during his second Arctic expedition, which began in 1908. His journal account of his first encounter with the Cop-



Stefansson was a visionary Arctic explorer, who claimed new lands for Canada.

per Eskimos two years later would be a state of wonder. "I had to imagine nothing," he wrote. "I had merely to look and listen. For here, were not the remains of the Stone Age, but the Stone Age itself?"

Stefansson's book on his second expedition, *My Life With the Eskimos*, brought him global fame. But his musings about the lost

HE LEARNED the Inuit language, adopted their diet and travelled more than 35,000 km by dog sleds in the North

Norse colony also stirred widespread concern that his love of a theory was a科学. In Canada, his reputation took a further blow during his third and final expedition when his lead dog, the Kukuk, became losted in ice north of Alaska, broke up and sank in January 1904. The 25 crew and accounts set off across the sea to St. Paul Island, 130 nautical miles and the most rugged near-inhabited, new blindness and severe frost bite. Stefansson was not among them. Before

the Kukuk sank, he went ashore with a hunting party, prompting some survivors to later charge that he had left them to die.

Todays most scholars, Palsson among them, doubt that Stefansson—whose party was stranded in the Arctic and presumed dead for months before being found on Banks Island—intended to abandon ship. But the loss of life and the trek's mounting costs proved embarrassing to Stefansson's sponsor, the Canadian government. Even though he discovered critical new lands, the explorer faced a chorus of critics when he finally came back south in 1918.

That chorus only grew louder four years later when Stefansson, by then retired from active exploration, sponsored four men in an ill-fated attempt to colonize Wrangel Island. Poorly equipped, the men slowly starved to death. Back home, enthusiasts charged Stefansson with recklessly trying to prove the thesis behind his 1902 book, *The Friendly Arctic*, that the region was entirely habitable if visitors simply adapted to Inuit ways. Palsson thinks, this time, the critics were right. "He took his rhetoric too far," he says, "and some people paid for that with their lives."

Stefansson left Canada for good in 1918, settling first in New York City and then in Hanover, where he enjoyed a long and distinguished career at Dartmouth College. A driven workaholic who had no hobbies and took no vacations, Stefansson wrote some two dozen books and more than 400 articles while presiding both Canada and the U.S. to open up their northern frontiers through roadmaps and resource development. In 1941, at age 62, the lifelong bachelor surprised his friends by marrying Dorothy Rand, a farmer's daughter in 35 years his junior (the couple had no children).

Palsson remains fascinated by the very different way Stefansson has been viewed in Canada and the rest of the world. "He was an important nation-builder at a critical point in Canada's history and yet he has tended to be viewed as a villain there," says Palsson. "It may be time to re-kindle that and at last embrace the Arctic dreamer as one of our own."

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Because existing laws may not be sufficient, the House will consider legislation that would amend the ADA to apply to health plans. The House will also consider legislation that would amend the ADA to apply to health plans and state insurance departments to prohibit discrimination against disabled individuals. Existing laws require states to provide insurance coverage for disabled individuals. The House will also consider legislation that would amend the ADA to prohibit discrimination against disabled individuals in state insurance departments.

A CONRADIAN TAKE ON FDR

Black's compelling biography, writes BOB RAE, is cynical about the New Deal

FOR THE PAST several weeks Canadians have indulged themselves in a collective outburst of *Cawdronblaze*, the joy taken in the creation of *Central Block*. Nothing would be more joyful for an historian, after all our traded trials these past 20 years, than to jump the fire. However, reviewing *Block/Franklin/Dolton/Keenlyside: Champions of Freedom* (HarperCollins, \$54.95) is not the moment to do so. Widows, orphans, shareholders and the public interest aside, this is a compelling biography.

It isn't a perfect read. Black has an adhesion to the source he can't break himself from using long words, obscure words, or words intended to make the reader feel ever so slightly inferior to the infinitely better read by Mr. Black. So we are told, when the author compares Franklin Roosevelt up to his fifth cousin who served as president, Teddy, that "he was a peasant" (Roosevelt and street, as euphemistic as Teddy was sarcastic). "Unlike you?" No, Murphy, it's useful to have a dictionary by your side. The book is very long (1,134 pages, and then the footnotes, bibliography and index), which makes it near impossible to read a new biography of FDR. But he has the one hardy distinction that accessibility is not something Black is aiming for.

It is much less readable, the prose denser, the opinions more intransigent, than Roy Jenkins on Churchill. The *counterrevolution* is gone. Conrad Roosevelt was a master of despatch, an ultrasecure cold and calculating steeler of power who used his skills for ends that were good. He was capable and resolute with rich people. He provided critical leadership and inspiration against the forces of evil and totalitarianism. He was not



Frances Dickey
Roosevelt:
Champion of
Freedom
HarperCollins
\$16.95

always very nice, but his ends were noble, and his personality was so radiant, so persuasive, so compelling that we should forgive him his faults.

"So we are told that "Raaswijk was as arbitrary a statesman, and as artful, if more sanguineous a Machiavellian as Hitler. In the middle of 1938 these facts were known to, and probably suspected by, no one except the grand and enigmatic occupant of the White House." In another passage Black describes EDR with admiration as "an adroit

predator [who] knew when to emerge, reveal his designs, and execute it. Once determined to lead opinion and implement a policy, he was unflappable, devious, acutely determined, and usually insatiable."

These traits, black women, were apparent from an early age, even at school when Roosevelt did not always tell the truth and exaggerated his exploits. The book does not add substantially to our knowledge of his early political career, but the theme of how Roosevelt used his charm in a calculated way is traced back to the beginning. Even when dealing with his now well-known First World War附註 with Lucy Moran, black women's thoughts that although Roosevelt had behaved with "unfashionable stupidity" [his] leveraging of Lucy's trust have been poignant and was obviously handled with requisite discretion.

No one will be surprised to learn that in common to Franklin's visionary and masterful writing, (black) Eleanor Roosevelt was a poet. "He qualified as a great wordsmith and grew impatient with her impracticality," the author writes. "When his political career resumed, abrasions between them would be a problem that would arise often." Black's analysis of Eleanor Roosevelt in these few short sentences ("Eleanor was far to the left of Franklin, whether he be in heaven, was galled by almost any faddish leftist cause that came along, but evergrindingly caused many of the greatest and most difficult cases early, such as the fight for African-Americans. That was a terrible advocate of aid to Russia and an apocalyptic follower of the domineering but base-baited cause as was not content to confine the far left.") By my count that's four "left" in three sentences.



Mr. Black can't help his bones. The strength of the book is that it is better, and bigger, than the author's weakness for 550 words and taking shots at the lady novelist who are so pushy today. Does he get likeable? His character right? Is he a classic quality? Is he a master of deception? But that may be too simple. Roosevelt's commitment to progressive causes was not a rose, not some sheer dervish to win water and power seats. He was not a name man, but a superb jester who fashioned a modern social democratic coalition that dominated American politics until the late 1960s. He accomplished his intent really.

cause he believed in them and because he knew his beliefs had found profound resonance with the American people.

Proposed crying in the wilderness may have the gibberish, but that no guarantee of political success itself. Roosevelt is the man who "stole the arguments of the left, enacted very diluted legislative version of them, and deprived the left of any possibility of political success." It could be argued that what Roosevelt really did was to win over the left, by insisting that reform be progressive, practical and focused. Long before the great European debacles of the 1930s, Roosevelt understood that democracy and capitalism were entirely compatible. The debate was not "capitalism versus socialism," for him a stale and theoretical issue.

rather it was what kind of capitalism could survive in America. That was the question that animated Roosevelt the progressive.

That is why the New Deal had such profound resonance around the world then, and still today. Roosevelt wasn't afraid to take on what he called the "economic royalists," and he did so not only because it was congenitally (a Black organ, somewhat cynically) but because he knew it had to be done. Black body overstates the case when he says Roosevelt "channeled" all the public's rage against the consequences of the Great Depression into an imperialistic cultus.¹⁰ What Roosevelt did was to renew people's confidence in the political system's ability to respond to their deepest concerns. He did this not only with the changing array of programs that we associate with the New Deal, but did it by communicating with people, by listening, by extension, and did

lengthing them, in a way that has always been the hallmark of great leadership.

Black also rightly points to Roosevelt's personal experience with pain starting in his late 30s as a turning point. Building on the insights of many others, Black describes how Roosevelt worked with both his wife and his early political mentor Louis Howe to conceal the severity of his paralysis. During his lifetime the public did not realize how serious Roosevelt's handicap was. The press specifically made no mention of him in his wheelchair. What people liked, instead, about Roosevelt was his humanity, courage and extraordinary good humour. He simply did not allow his illness to get him down, or to keep him down. From the famous smile to the furrowed frown, FDR created a persona that seemed another false fairytale. He was a warmer, friendlier human being than Black makes him out to be, with more friends and a stronger connection to all those around him.

Black's account of the shift from his Roosevelt described it "The New Deal" to "Dr. Win the War" is a familiar narrative of Roosevelt's most difficult road. FDR recognized the danger posed to the world by the shortcomings of the New Deal. Yet American opinion in the late 1930s was still isolationist and unwilling to commit to another European war. How to effect the change? Roosevelt let the American people see the war in the facts as they unfolded for themselves.

The final part of the book is about reusing FDR from his success on the right—the way he had used Pearl Harbor, mismanaged the war, was both fired and failed at home, and was bullied and belittled by Stalin shortly before his death. Here Black's judgments are trenchant. On Pearl Harbor, charges that Roosevelt withheld information from his commanders on the grounds they are "preposterous," "not a shred of evidence" to support them. On the war, Black documents an erosion in ideal Roosevelt's pragmatic management style, delegating authority to a likes-minded military

commander in chief. The author suggests in the Stalin started the Cold War, for which Roosevelt can hardly be blamed. FDR's leadership ensured that the U.S. was fully involved in the rebuilding of Europe after the war, as well as in creating the United Nations and a world legal and political structure in a way that Franklin Roosevelt Wilson could not achieve at the end of the First World War. Black is determined to point to a Roosevelt



Roosevelt and Churchill on Aug. 19, 1941, on a battleship in Argentia Bay, off Newfoundland

such as Marshall, Nimitz, Eisenhower and Bradley, and intervening when necessary but without the executive overreach that Alan Brooks documents so exhaustively in his study accounts of the relationship between Churchill and his generals.

Black reserves his strongest Empowdering

those who've argued that Roosevelt gave away the Eastern European arena to the Soviets. Roosevelt's pragmatism, he argues, was born of wealth and privilege, who engaged in a series of deals and investments in the 1920s, and who never left the world into which he had been born. He doubtless sympathized with the fabled day. Let me give my two-cent opinion. It's hard to see the impression that Black is pointing to a mirror when he sees a man who behaved intensely as a capitalist, who was only being cynical when he mobilized opinion against the economic royalties of his time, who really disliked trade unions and their leaders, and who was running and robbing at the service of a higher cause.

Yet even after sending Black's account, with an update on the benefits of lower taxes on wealthy people and the threats of a conservative trade union movement, most people will conclude that FDR was, on balance, a profound disaster, and that what he did with his skills and talents is more important than the world from which he came. It's hard to believe that Roosevelt's pragmatism in war was making the world safer for rich people. We can only be grateful that Roosevelt harvested the talents and courage to cause that were large and noble, and that his leadership and courage were put to good use. Control Black's world has finally recognized the great debate about Roosevelt. Barr has by no means closed it.

IT COULD be argued that what Roosevelt really did was to reinvent the left, by insisting reforms be pragmatic and focused

So too is this. The author suggests in the Stalin started the Cold War, for which Roosevelt can hardly be blamed. FDR's leadership ensured that the U.S. was fully involved in the rebuilding of Europe after the war, as well as in creating the United Nations and a world legal and political structure in a way that Franklin Roosevelt Wilson could not achieve at the end of the First World War. Black is determined to point to a Roosevelt

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MOTHER OF ALL CRUSADES

The finale of *The Lord of the Rings* is a grand but alarming spectacle

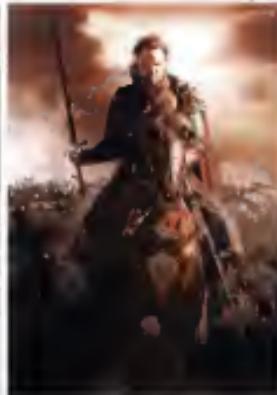
AS THE YULE draws nigh in this, our post-modern Middle Earth, it is time for peace and merriment among all the even members of the West. But a shadow has fallen across the land. The Dark Lord of Hollywood has unleashed a lost world of warfare. Already the darkening plains of the malcontent Gondor with primitive weaponry—the canon balls and catapults of *Pirates of the Caribbean* and *Master and Commander*; the silver flash of ceremonial swords in *All Fall Down* and *The Last Samuri*; fiery arrows and archer-athas in *The Matrix*. But these battles are mere skirmishes next to the Armageddon that awaits us in *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*, a conflagration that gathers from clouds of armoured cavalry, giant battering rams and catapults of fire to a full-bore apocalyptic denouement.

Return of the King is the Super Bowl of Hollywood blockbusters, a pageant that leaves all others in the dust. And there's no question that the third and final conclusion of Peter Jackson's monumental trilogy is a staggering tour of filimaking. It may well be the movie of the year. But at the risk of sounding like a babble-babbling grinch, I have to say that it puts me in a really final mood. I've tried hard to give the *LOTR* trilogy the benefit of the doubt. Though not a fan of *Return* or of special effects, I was impressed by the first movie. With the sword, I became enthralled by the triumphs of the enthralling scenes. And by the end of the third, I felt I'd been through a floodgate-like crusade in which the forces of light, and the West—alas, a survivor, anachronistic with blue eyes—go to war against dark and ugly forces. That's expected to hear Howard Shore's *Soldier's Dream* on the soundtrack.

Like *The Odyssey*, or *Dante's Inferno*, Tolkien's saga is a journey to hell and back. In *The Return of the King*, we finally reach the hellfire of Mount Doom, the volcano into which Frodo (Elijah Wood) must run the searing fling in order to complete his quest and set the curtainwright. In that sense, this final movie is the story, and it makes the first two movies seem like mere appetizers.

Some plot summary is in order. To the uninitiated, the may sound like gibberish, and for Tolkien fans it's old news, so feel free to skip the next paragraph.

Jackson's 200-minute epic unfolds on several fronts. With the smoky habbit Pippin



Monochrome shows Jackson's passionate, painterly epic

(Billy Boyd) in tow, the wizard Gandalf (Ian McKellen) tries to bolster the crippled defense of Gondor which is under siege by the Dark Lord Sauron. Ruling Gondor in the king's absence is Denethor (John Noble), who's so embittered by the death of his favorite son that he's given up his fight. The true heir to Gondor's throne is the reclusive, wizened Aragorn (the magnetic Viggo Mortensen). Finally ready to reveal his lineage, he rides into the underworld to recruit an skeletal army of the long dead. In the neighbouring kingdom of Rohan, King

Theoden (Bernard Hill) rallies his troops, while two characters sneak into the fray after being told to stay home—Merry (Dominic Monaghan) because he's a hothead, and Pippin (Miranda Otto) because that's fine. Two other women have a solo presence: Cate Blanchett's elf queen and Liv Tyler's elf princess. But the pretzel drama belongs to Frodo, as he climbs the staircase to hell with the loyal hobbit Sam (Sean Astin) at his flanks, and the grotesque Gollum (Andy Serkis) serving as their untrustworthy guide.

Gollum's speech, like his body, is so twisted that it almost needs subtitles, but as he shuffles between the two poles of hideous pantomime, he's truly sinister. Meanwhile, Frodo and Sam are like brothers in a combat movie, their grimy faces red with exhaustion as they scale Mount Doom. And the bond between them, magnified from the book, becomes really homoerotic. With Sam as his sexual lieutenant, literally carrying him through hell, the debonair Frodo writes in sexual torment—on some Closet figure bordered by a ring instead of a cross.

Jackson's painterly vision reaches its apogee in the lava of Mount Doom. Some of the other effects are more cartoon-like—the minotaurs-like animal, the giant spider, Shireeb. And Tolkien's ghost warriors are rendered as fluorescent green zombies, not unlike the undead hordes in *Pirates of the Caribbean*. Still, I can't quibble with Jackson's execution, which is brilliant, or his passion, which goes beyond the call of duty. What disturbs me is the film's religiosity. Just as sex or violence can turn lead when transported from page to screen, so can myth. What's alarming is that Jackson has made a powerful movie about a holy war, depicting it as an endorsement of unalloyed misgiveness.

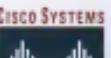
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Over to You | BY PAUL KNOWLES



JUST A CHRISTMAS CARD

It's true what they say about good things coming in small packages

IT SOUNDS terribly philosophical, but in truth our request was founded at least as much in self-preservation as in altruism, friendly, anyway. Maureen and I have been married for just over five years. Getting married at our age (late 40s) and level of life experience is the opposite of doing so at the beginning of adult life. It is not a question of "will they give us the stuff we need?" Instead, it is, "How do we dispose of half the stuff we have?" At the time, we each had fully furnished homes and—with only occasional blips like the failure of the microwave the day after we gave the other one away—we have not needed

anything. This makes it a bit difficult for those going to gifts.

This difficulty extends to what we call our "practiced family" (it's way past blended). There are eight kids in all, variously separated through interesting lives and sporting a variety of interests. Actually, only two of the children still live at home, the rest are only semi-separated—some have homes and partners (one such combination has produced our fine grandchild); some have just begun the adventure of independence. Temporary addresses in recent months have included Japan, Syria, England, Austria and South Korea. For these young people, ranging in age from 13 to 27, dollar earned is a dollar to be invested in life.

And so, in the run-up to Christmas 2012, the question arose, one by one from each of them, "What do you want for Christmas?"

They are at that formative stage of life when the answer is either "nothing" or something so expensive that none of us could possibly afford it. In the process of elimination, then, we again realized we wanted for nothing. After hours徘徊ed in the measure we decided to ask for something different. And so, Maureen came up with a wonderful idea. We told the kids that what we wanted from them was a Christmas card "just a card?" was the unhappy response.

"No," we said, "we want a card that tells us about something you have done for your community. Some volunteer work you have done for someone in your neighbourhood." Keeping in mind a very broad definition of

"neighbours" (that's a lot of neighborhoods). In the months before Christmas last year, our kids were living across Ontario in Ottawa, Kingston, Thunder Bay, Toronto, Kitchener and, of course, in our home in New Hamburg.

Initially, they were not so sure about this plan. But on Christmas morning, most of them were assembled in our parlor. We had the traditional stockings for them. They shared other gifts among themselves. And then, one by one, the cards appeared. Each

one serving an "Christmas line" at the service at our local church.

One child gave us the gift of volunteering with the Non-Traditional Rights Association, another the—and we should emphasize—another participated in the cathedral choir at St. George's Cathedral in Simpson—perhaps an unlikely extracurricular activity for a second-year university student.

Our youngest handed us a card noting that his gift was his volunteer work with the Special Olympics—each week, he assisted with both swimming and bowling here in our community.

Our elder and his wife wrote, "In Octa ber, we sent an e-mail to all our friends and family and said thank you for your Christmas gift this year we were raising money to buy gifts for the Salvation Army Angel Tree. Because of the response we got from our friends and family, we received

\$385 and we were able to buy gifts for 84 children. This includes children and adults over the age of 10 are the ones most frequently forgotten, we focused on buying gifts for babies and for older kids. We then sent a thank-you e-mail to everyone who contributed, and attached a digital picture of all the gifts we bought."

My wife's suggestion has made a difference in literally dozens of lives—not least among the lives of our children, who have seen, first-hand, how little effort it really can take for a person to make an impact for good.

The results and cards and such from previous Christmases are long gone—scattered, or more beyond recall. But these gifts from Christmas 2012 are a special box, to be opened again and again.

And the year, we know exactly what we are asking our children to do for Christmas. Look out, world, here they come. Again. ■

Paul Knowles is a writer who knows what he wants for Christmas. To comment, www.capecodnews.com



of them, by coincidence, was handmade. Their gifts varied right across their own spectrum of interests.

One result, "For Christmas, I sent a shoe box full of toys and necessities to a little girl in Guatemala. I bought all sorts of books, blankets, crayons, paper, tooth-care items, shampoo, deodorant, toothbrush and more. It was a wonderful feeling to give to someone who would be so grateful and happy. Although that was to a little child who had never seen it, I feel that I have made a difference."

Another card simply said, "For your present, I helped out at the church auction and I

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CLOSING NOTES



Music |
You go, girls!



SKATE STREET NAME: Is pretty but is-on-for a leading pop princess. **The 19-year-old from** Atlanta, Ga., who will release *Master From the Classroom* (Capitol) in April, is a songwriter and pop-rock and design-for-senior-clothes. **With her singer wife S** on the soundtrack for the film *Love in the Time of Monsters* (in limited release).



People | From Kraft Dinner to the Big Apple

For Dobson, a rough start (which was released last week) and then getting her own place in Toronto and giving her steady the kiss-off in *Bye Bye Bye* (you'd expect the 18-year-old high-school dropout to walk around with attitude)—bragging about her fights or at least sporting some trendy punk-ass accessories. But offstage, Dobson is all sweetness. Wearing a big, furry winter coat that she says reminds her of Penny Lane's in the movie *American Graffiti*, she coots to being a "teenage ingenue" but every-gangsterish.

Originally from the Toronto suburb of Scarborough, Dobson was signed to Universal/Island/Def Jam Records a year ago by Lyor Cohen, Run-D.M.C.'s early manager, who also shaped the careers of the Beastie Boys and Busta Rhymes. Dobson quit Grade 11, moved to New York City to record

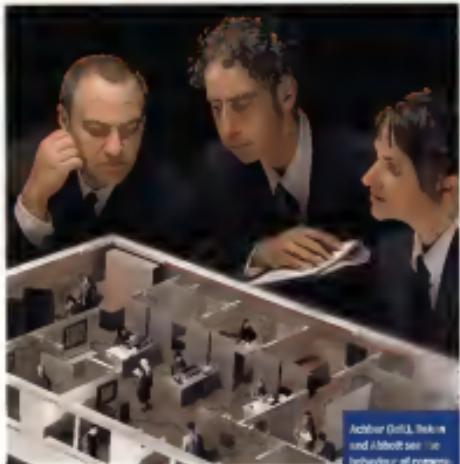


Dobson quit high school to move to New York City, where she recorded her self-titled debut

herself (she'd been in a band) and then got her own place in Toronto. "It was hard to move out—my mom and I fought about it," says the singer, who was raised by her single mother. "She's very protective. She wouldn't let us out as kids—it had to talk to my friends through the screen door or over the fence in the backyard."

Now her mom's going to have to share her with the world—so MTV's already hotly pushing her aggressive poppy足以. But Dobson's ready to help her family adjust to this new lifestyle. "I'm going to be putting my brother through art college," she proudly states, before momming out that right now he's only 10. "We had no money growing up, just hope and Kraft Dinner. For Christmas, we went to food banks." This year, though, things will be different. **—SHANNON OZELIN**

STYLING CHAMPS: Want your average kindergarten kid. While most five-year-olds in the early '80s were feeling out songs by an annoying popstar dupe, Champlin wowed audiences as her basement of Ottawa covering rapper *Papac Mekan*. Now signed to Interscope, the 15-year-old R&B singer releases her first studio album this spring. **Her quick rise proves the rumors were beyond her years.** **JOHN BROWN**



Film | A treat for the Dutch

Canadian filmmakers made a splash at the prestigious International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA) in November. The Corporation, by British Columbian Mark Achbar, Jennifer Abbott and Joel Bakan, won the long-term Second Prize.

Singled out for its "brilliantly argued" intellectual journey, the film, which will open here in January, left audiences wondering whether it could be the next *Brooding for Catherine Wheel*. On everything from its corporate spying, the film explains that international law deems a corporation a "person." This begs the question: what sort of person does a corporation resemble?

"A psychopath," say the filmmakers, They are medical diagnostic criteria to compare psychopathic behaviour to the way a corporation operates. "When a person is capable of only serving his own self-interest, doesn't feel any guilt, and is incapable of being concerned for others or of acting in a moral way generally we call that person a psychopath," says Baker.

The other *Canthidae* entries at the IOFA



Television | Sing we joyous, all together

All that gift shopping getting you down? 'Tis time to enjoy the holidays! Sometimes a Christmas spread can lift those shopping spirits. As judge Christopher with *Art Attack*, Bert Charvet does a fine job of that, too, creating classically trained concert highlights this moving musical tribute to Artistic musical and seasonal classics, which also features pre-shopping performances by *Art Attack* regulars Joe Smily and his jazz trio, and *Art Attack* Michaelson, a blues-based duo if ever there was one. The special was filmed at the *Orpheum* in St. Louis, the *Academy of Music* in

Set it all on *Witless* on Dec. 22, 25 and 26, the latter being the first week of Genesis Award-winning *Witless* Film Series. Broadway's Taylore, the company's founder, artful director and conductor, strives to bring African cultures to the Black community. The group has released five albums, *Listen to the Chants*, *The Music of Indigenous Ours*, and *An Indigenous Christmas*. *Witless* *Chants* *Witless* The Intended meaning of his own *Witless* is that Taylore's *Witless* is being all cultures to the table. "We all eat the people," he says, "and *empowering*

ANSWER



Exhibition | A heroic tale

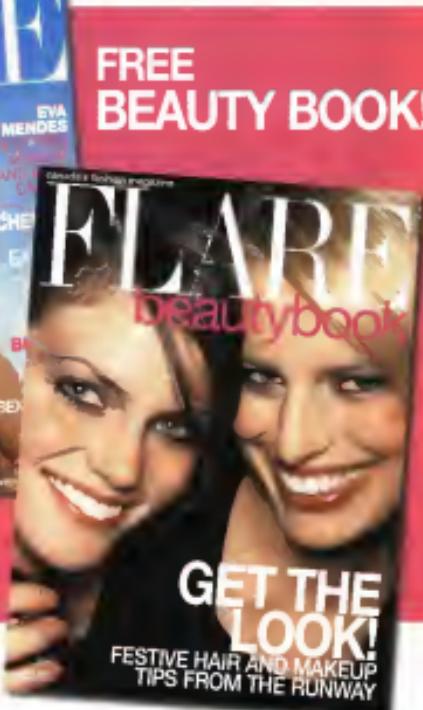
Orkville Galleries presents *Fly Trap until*
Jan. 31 in Orkville, Ont.

Salterhoff and the limits of responsibility are no innovations. This was argued by Maurice J. Cole Greyson and colleague David M. Ross. The Toronto article was influenced by a 1984 Thomas and Corinne Steptoe paper, and seems to have been an obituary. In *Art Theory, Music and Thomas* search for a subject for an article that did not have, according to the Authors, the audience "concerned" the story of Athelred and his right to impune *ASB* in a case in South Africa. Heady and political, it is not an angle that needs no attention.

1. *What is the relationship between the two main characters?*

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ARE SOLD





John Intini starts a sentence ... Nicholas Campbell finishes it

Nicholas Campbell doesn't pull any punches: as The 51-year-old Vancouverite, who plays connoisseur Dominic De Vito on the CBC's *Da Vinci's Inquest*, is known for being unashamedly frank. He also has an appreciation for being a guy who enjoys making the odd wager or the racetrack. The one-time law student at Queen's University in Kingston, Ont., the switched-to-English and droll has carved out an award-winning career as a jockey and a horse owner. His recently finished

Macmillan Research Report

John Intini's sentences

GETTING OUT TO THE TRACK ... is the one place in the world where I can find total solace. The numbers and horses make me forgetful for a moment (my life PM AFRAID OF ... isn't spending enough time with my kids. I have one running 14 and one running 10. My son had was a genius in school, but his parents are starting to slip a bit. It's critical I'm around more right now.

MENTAL CAMPBELL
1. *Match His Bet* (short)
2. *The Chase* (2001)
3. *Hyperbole*
4. *Laurence Olivier*
5. *The TV production of classic rock* (Little Books) (2002)
6. *Grand父亲's* (2003)
7. *Time capsule* (2003)
8. *Da Vinci's Inquest* (2003)

A SENSE OF HUMOUR ... is necessary to meet a great woman. It took me too-long to figure that out. A sense of humor also helps keep a family together.

Books | Sour, sweet, salty, bitter—and very yummy

Once a chef chef in New York and London, Sybil Kapoor is now one of the top food writers in English. In her new book, *Food: A Love Story to Cook With* (Harper), she divides the world of food into the categories she's sour, salty, bitter, sweet, and, um, interesting. Table, Kapoor, kept a variety of recipes for different heat-affected dishes—she's talking about the local rice-pickled up the tongue and not flowers, which depend on saltiness alone and a combination, and how they intersect with a sense of it. It sounds hardly, even laughable, academic, but Kapoor makes her research has paid off, and the recipes support that assertion. Under the heading "lemon and olive chicken tagine" she writes, "In this sour, bitter and salty recipe, the olives and preserved lemons both add bitterness and saltiness which reduce the dish with an intriguing sweet sour intensity." Sounds simply delicious to us.



BestSellers

PREVIOUS PAGE

Fiction

1. *THE WAY THE CROW FLIES*, Ann Patchett (2003)
2. *THE DA VINCI CODE*, Dan Brown (2003)
3. *THE IN-BETWEEN WORLD OF MARION CALL*, Jim G. Knopf (2003)
4. *THE BIRDS OF PARADISE*, John Irving (2003)
5. *SECRET SOCIETY*, John Irving (2003)
6. *REVIEW OF THE UNDEAD*, Stephenie Meyer (2003)
7. *HEARNSHAW*, Jacqueline (2003)
8. *THE REINTERVIEW*, Ruth Reichl (2003)
9. *POUNCE*, David Morrell (2003)
10. *WWW.JOHNSON'S*, Stewart O'Nan (2003)

Non-fiction

1. *SHARE RAIDS: WHEN THE REVENGE*, Robert Baldwin (2003)
2. *REMEMBER OR SURRENDER*, Sami Chaidoff (2003)
3. *ROBIE, AMERICA'S COURTEOUS*, Robie (2003)
4. *REINFORCING RELATIONSHIP*, Reinforcement (2003)
5. *WHO'S TELL THE TALE*, Barbara Shore Minick (2003)
6. *MAKING THE MIND WORK*, Thomas Cook (2003)
7. *THE GROUP OF NATION*, David Sacks (2003)
8. *RETHINK*, Richard Buxton (2003)
9. *THE CAPITAL OF THE MIND*, James D. Schatz (2003)
10. *1001 LITTLE KNOWLEDGE*, 2 (2003)
11. *INTERVIEW WITH*, Christopher Hitchens (2003)



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IT IS 'THE ONE WHO WINS'

Chrétien's definition of what makes a good politician is no surprise

"HEY BRUCE!" one of Jean Chrétien's helpers shouted to another, across the length of a grueling table at a restaurant on the Champs Élysées. "What time are we wheeling up for Ottawa on Wednesday?"

The guy at the other end of the table pondered the question, then shrugged. "Sometime between noon and six."

Great hilarity at this breakdown in careful planning. A chair went up around the table. "Four more days! Four more days!"

So began Jean Chrétien's last work in politics.

There was a time when it would have been impossible to imagine he would spend it in Paris with Jacques Chirac. They put off their interview. In 1993 Chrétien was campaigning for the French presidency. He met some thugs that sounded no supportive of Quebec separation. Chrétien dismissed the encounter with cool contempt. At one time, he said, Quebecers were no blither to vote for independence than Chirac would become president of France.

Oops. Chirac did worse, told to say the least, he has it in him to carry a grudge. But something odd happened. The two leaders, one patrician and elegant, the other rough-hewn and incoherent, became the closest of friends.

There is a school of thought that credits Jean Pelletier, the former Chrétien chief of staff who has known Chrétien since Pelletier was the mayor of Quebec City and Chrétien was the mayor of Paris. Another theory credits George W. Bush, whose Iraq adventure gave Chirac and Chrétien something big to oppose together.

I think it's simpler. After a while, Chirac and Chrétien realized they were two of a kind. Both can be perfect assassins. Both believe nothing in politics matters more than victory, because nothing can be done after defeat.

At any rate, there has hardly ever been a love-in like the one Chirac threw for Chrétien. At the opening ceremony for an exhibit on Canada at an amateur science museum,



Chrétien cut all the "vous" in his prepared text and addressed Chrétien with the familiar pronoun "ta." "Relations between France and Canada 'have never been better,'" he said. "Never." He called Chrétien "an innovation to hope for the future."

There was more, then more of the same a few hours later at a state dinner. Afterward, most of Chrétien's travelling staff retreated to somebody's hotel room and dozed until dawn. And sometime between noon and 4 p.m. on Thursday, Chrétien's Challenger jet began heading home.

On such occasions, prime minister and staff roll up front, journalists sit in the back. As soon as the overhead lights came off, Chrétien came back to dash. "What would he do after Paul Martin took over?" I plaintively asked. And, bluster, rather than no-hands, because I don't think Alain was necessarily his minister chef, he said. "That would pretty much be a disaster."

Where would he work? He wouldn't say, but we would not have to wait long to find out. "Between Christmas and New Year's, I will ski. And the first week of January I will go to work."

The relationship with Chirac, he said, deepened and solidified during a 1999 visit to a summit of la Francophonie at Montréal, followed by a trip to Iqaluit to explore Inuit art and culture. "He was very, very moved when he arrived in Iqaluit," Chrétien said. He smiled. "He said I was lucky: there were incredible northern lights. I said, 'Jacques, I arranged it all for you!'

We pressed him for legacy stuff, for anecdotes that would sum up his career. He resisted. "You know, the anecdotes you have are not always the big things."

Finally he offered an example. "An incident that troubled me enormously." Typically, the incident had to do with consciousness.

This summer Chrétien and the National Gallery brought a huge art show to an abandoned factory in his hometown of Shawinigan. Pure word heifer park, many called it. Chrétien will have none of it. "You know," he said, Shawinigan "was a very prosperous city because of hydro power. It became one of the poorest cities in Quebec. Five thousand jobs were lost. And people lost their savings. More than anything, they'd kind of lost their pride."

Then, in Shawinigan, "somebody said to me, 'Thanks for inviting us to your Bodin, Déjaz, Please Fit to proud!'"

He paused to sever the memory again. "That was the worst movie. 'Thank you for inviting Bodin! It was nice!'"

He started to head back to the front of the plane. He'd be back yet again to trade still more parts, but the formal serum was over. Almost. A reporter called a last question. What's a good politician?

He maneuvered over his shoulder. "The one who wins."

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